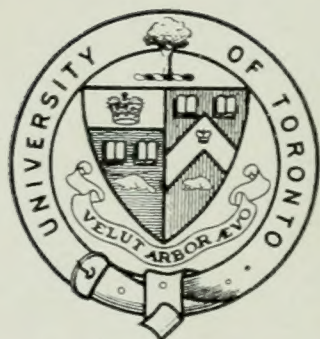
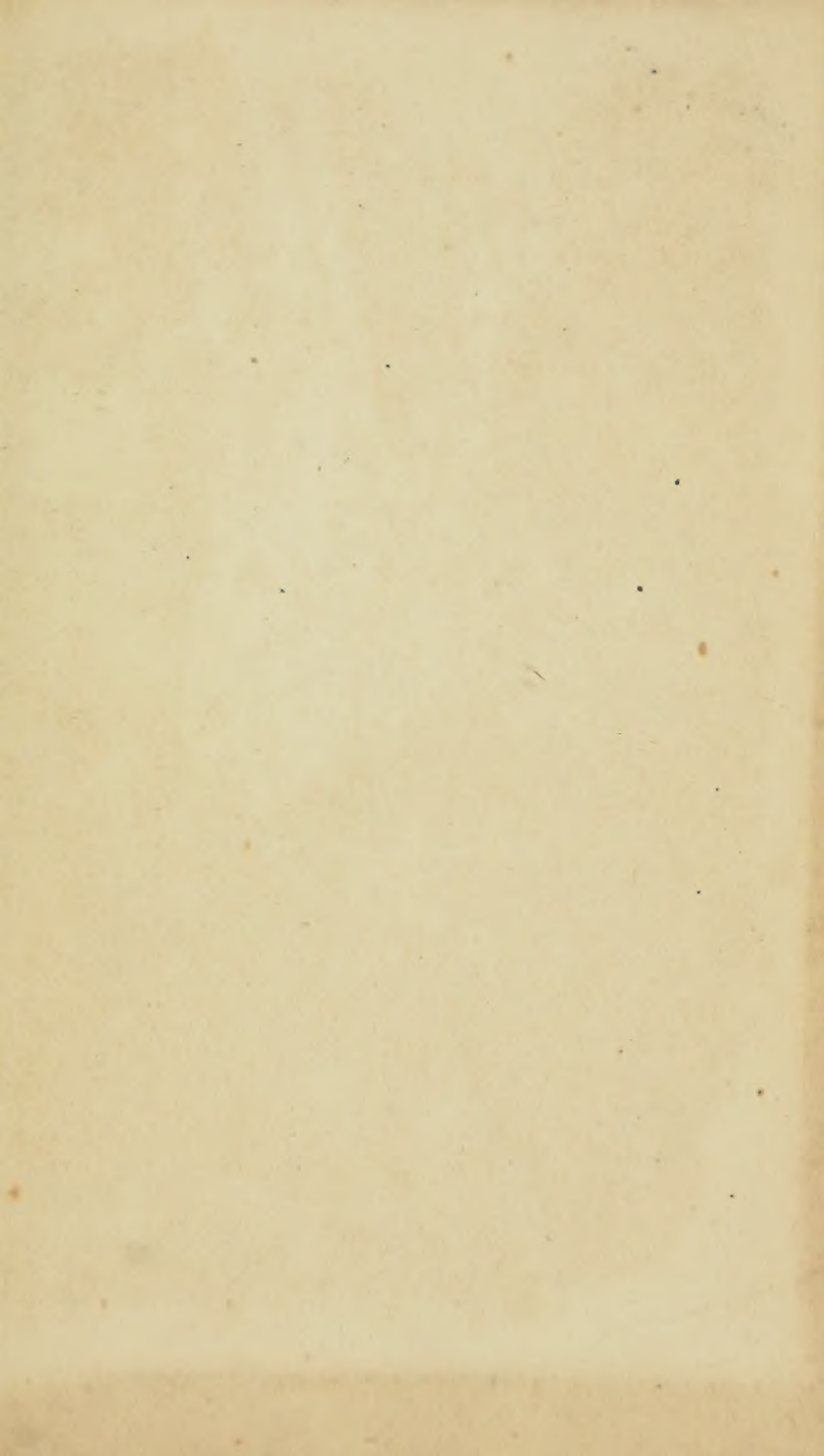


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A HISTORY OF  
THE FOUR GEORGES  
AND OF  
WILLIAM IV

VOL. I



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**THE FOUR GEORGES**

AND OF  
**WILLIAM IV**

BY  
**JUSTIN MCCARTHY**



IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I

FINE-PAPER EDITION

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1905



A HISTORY OF

# THE FOUR GEORGES

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# A HISTORY OF THE FOUR GEORGES

## CHAPTER I

“MORE, ALAS ! THAN THE QUEEN’S LIFE !”

“THE QUEEN is pretty well,” Swift wrote to Lord Peterborough on May 18, 1714, “at present, but the least disorder she has puts all in alarm.” Swift goes on to tell his correspondent that “when it is over we act as if she were immortal, neither is it possible to persuade people to make any preparations against an evil day.” Yet on the condition of Queen Anne’s health depended to all appearance the continuance of peace in England. While Anne was sinking down to death rival claimants were planning to seize the throne ; rival statesmen and rival parties were plotting, intriguing, sending emissaries, moving troops, organising armies, for a great struggle. Queen Anne had reigned for little more than twelve years, and at the time when Swift wrote the words we have quoted, her reign was drawing rapidly to a close.

England watched with the greatest anxiety the latest days of Queen Anne’s life, not out of any deep concern for the Queen herself, but simply because of the knowledge that with her death must come a crisis and might come a revolution. Who was to snatch the crown as it fell from Queen Anne’s dying head ? Over at Herrenhausen in Hanover was one claimant to the throne ; flitting between Lorraine and St. Germain was another. Here, at home, in the Queen’s very council chamber, round the Queen’s dying

bed, were the English heads of the rival parties caballing against each other, some of them deceiving Hanover, some of them deceiving James Stuart, and more than one, it must be confessed, deceiving at the same moment Hanoverians and Stuarts alike. Anne had no children living. No succession could therefore take place, but only an accession, and at such a crisis in the history of England any deviation from the direct line must bring peril with it. At the time when Queen Anne lay dying it might have meant a new revolution and another civil war.

The reigning House of Hanover was one of those lucky families which appear to have what may be called a gift of inheritance. There are some such houses among European sovereignties; whenever there is a breach in the continuity of succession anywhere, one or other of them is sure to come in for the inheritance. George the Elector, who was now waiting to become King of England as soon as the breath should be out of Anne's body, belonged to the House of Guelf, or Welf, said to have been founded by Guelf, the son of Isembert, a count of Altdorf, and Irmintrude, sister of Charlemagne, early in the ninth century. It had two branches, which were united in the eleventh century by the marriage of one of the Guelf ladies to Albert Azzo the Second, Lord of Este and Marquis of Italy. His son Guelf obtained the Bavarian possessions of his wife's stepfather, a Guelf of Bavaria. One of his descendants, called Henry the Lion, married Maud, daughter of Henry the Second of England, and became the founder of the family of Brunswick. War and imperial favour and imperial displeasure interfered during many generations with the integrity of the Duchy of Brunswick, and the Electorate of Hanover was made up for the most part out of territories which Brunswick had once owned. The Emperor Leopold constructed it formally into an Electorate in 1692, with Ernest Augustus of Brunswick-Lüneberg as its first Elector. The George Louis, who now in 1714 is waiting to become King of England, was the son of Ernest Augustus and of Sophia, youngest daughter of Elizabeth Stuart, Queen of Bohemia, sister to Charles I. of England. Elizabeth had married Frederick, the Elector-



Palatine of the Rhine, and her life was crossed and thwarted by the opening of the 'Thirty Years' War, and then by the misfortunes of her brother Charles and his dynasty. Elizabeth survived the English troubles and saw the Restoration, and came to live in England, and to see her nephew, Charles the Second, reign as king. She barely saw this. Two years after the Restoration she died in London. Sophia was her twelfth child; she had thirteen in all. One of Sophia's elder brothers was Prince Rupert, that "Rupert of the Rhine," of whom Macaulay's ballad says that, "Rupert never comes but to conquer or to die," the Rupert whose daring and irresistible charges generally won his half of the battle only that the other half might be lost, and that his success might be swallowed up in the ruin of his companions. His headlong bravery was a misfortune rather than an advantage to his cause, and there seems to have been one instance, that of the surrender of Bristol, in which that bravery deserted him for the moment. We see him afterwards, in the pages of Pepys, an uninteresting, prosaic, pedantic figure, usefully employed in scientific experiments, and with all the gilt washed off him by time and years and the commonplace wear and tear of routine life.

George inherited none of the accomplishments of his mother. His father was a man of some talent and force of character, but he cared nothing for books or education of any kind, and George was allowed to revel in ignorance. He had no particular merit except a certain easy good nature, which rendered him unwilling to do harm or to give pain to any one, unless some interest of his own should make it convenient. His neglected and unrestrained youth was abandoned to licence and profligacy. He was married in the twenty-third year of his age, against his own inclination, to the Princess Sophia Dorothea of Zell, who was some six years younger. The marriage was merely a political one, formed with the object of uniting the whole of the Duchy of Lüneberg. George was attached to another girl; the Princess is supposed to have fixed her affections upon another man. They were married, however, on November 21, 1682, and during all her life Sophia Doro-

thea had to put up with the neglect, the contempt, and afterwards the cruelty of her husband. George's strongest taste was for ugly women. One of his favourites, Mademoiselle Schulemberg, Maid of Honour to his mother, and who was afterwards made Duchess of Kendal, was conspicuous, even in the unlovely Hanoverian court, for the awkwardness of her long, gaunt, fleshless figure. Another favourite of George's, Madame Kilmansegge, afterwards made Countess of Darlington, represented a different style of beauty. She is described by Horace Walpole as having "large fierce black eyes rolling beneath lofty arched eyebrows, two acres of cheeks spread with crimson, an ocean of neck that overflowed and was not distinguishable from the lower part of her body, and no portion of which was restrained by stays."

It would not be surprising if the neglected Sophia Dorothea should have looked for love elsewhere, or at least should not have been strict enough in repelling it when it offered itself. Philip Christof Königsmark, a Swedish soldier of fortune, was supposed to be her favoured lover. He suffered for his amour; and it was said that his death came by the special order—one version has it by the very hand—of George the Elector, the owner of the ladies Schulemberg and Kilmansegge. Sophia Dorothea was banished for the rest of her life to the Castle of Ahlden on the river Aller. In the old schloss of Hanover the spot is still shown, outside the door of the Hall of Knights, which tradition has fixed upon as the spot where the assassination of Königsmark took place.

The Königsmarks were in their way a famous family. The elder brother was the Charles John Königsmark celebrated in an English State trial as the man who planned and helped to carry out the murder of Thomas Thynne. Thomas Thynne, of Longleat, the accused of Titus Oates, the "Wise Issachar," the "wealthy Western friend" of Dryden, the comrade of Monmouth, the "Tom of Ten Thousand" of every one, was betrothed to Elizabeth, the child-widow—she was only fifteen years old—of Lord Ogle. Königsmark, fresh from love-making in all the courts of Europe, and from fighting anything and everything, from

the Turk at Tangiers to the wild bulls of Madrid, seems to have fallen in love with Thynne's betrothed wife, and to have thought that the best way of obtaining her was to murder his rival. The murder was done, and its story is recorded in clumsy bas-relief over Thynne's tomb in Westminster Abbey. Königsmark's accomplices were executed, but Königsmark got off and died years later, fighting for the Venetians at the siege of classic Argos. The soldier in Virgil falls on a foreign field, and dying remembers sweet Argos. The elder Königsmark dying before sweet Argos ought of right to remember that spot where St. Albans Street joins Pall Mall, and where Thynne was done to death. The Königsmarks had a sister, the beautiful Aurora, who was mistress of Frederick Augustus, Elector of Saxony, and so mother of the famous Maurice de Saxe, and ancestress of George Sand. Later, like the fair sinner of some tale of chivalry, she ended her days in pious retirement as prioress of the Protestant Abbey at Quedlinburg.

George was born in Osnabrück in March 1660, and was therefore now in his fifty-fifth year. As his first qualification for the government of England, it may be mentioned that he did not understand one sentence of the English language, was ignorant of English ways, history and traditions, and had as little sympathy with the growing sentiments of the majority of educated English people as if he had been an Amurath succeeding an Amurath.

When George became Elector on the death of his father in 1698, he showed, however, some capacity for improvement, under the influence of the new responsibility imposed upon him by his station. His private life did not amend, but his public conduct acquired a certain solidity and consistency which was not to have been expected from his previous mode of living. One of his merits was not likely to be by any means a merit in the eyes of the English people. He was, to do him justice, deeply attached to his native country. He had all the love for Hanover that the cat has for the hearth to which it is accustomed. The ways of the place suited him; the climate, the soil, the whole conditions of life were exactly what he would have them to be. He lived up to the age of fifty-four a con



tented, stolid, happy, dissolute Elector of Hanover ; and it was a complete disturbance to all his habits and his predilections when the expected death of Anne compelled him to turn his thoughts to England.

The other claimant of the English crown was James Frederick Edward Stuart, the Old Pretender, as he came to be afterwards called by his enemies, the Chevalier de Saint George, as his friends called him, when they did not think it prudent to give him the title of King. James was the half-brother of Queen Anne. He was the son of James the Second, by James's second wife, Maria d'Este, sister to Francis, Duke of Modena. Maria was only the age of Juliet when she married ; she had just passed her fourteenth year. Like Juliet, she was beautiful ; unlike Juliet, she was poor. She was a devout Roman Catholic, and therefore was especially acceptable to her husband. She had four children in quick succession, all of whom died in infancy ; and then for ten years she had no child. The "London Gazette" surprised the world one day by the announcement that the Queen had become pregnant, and upon June 10, 1688, she gave birth to a son. It need hardly be told now that the wildest commotion was raised by the birth of the prince. The great majority of the Protestants insinuated, or stoutly declared, that the alleged heir-apparent was not a child of the Queen. The story was that a newly-born child, the son of a poor miller, had been brought into the Queen's room in a warming-pan, and passed off as the son of the Queen. It was said that Father Petre, a Catholic clergyman, had been instrumental in carrying out this contrivance, and therefore the enemies of the royal family talked of the young prince as Perkin or Petrelin. The warming-pan was one of the most familiar objects in satirical literature and art for many generations after. A whole school of caricature was heated into life, if we may use such an expression, by this fabulous warming-pan. Warming-pans were associated with brass money and wooden shoes in the mouths and minds of Whig partisans down to a day not far remote from our own. Mr. Jobson, the vulgar lawyer in Scott's "Rob Roy," talks rudely to Diana Vernon, a Catholic, about "King William, of glorious and

immortal memory, our immortal deliverer from Papists and pretenders, and wooden shoes, and warming-pans." "Sad things those wooden shoes and warming-pans," retorted the young lady, who seemed to take pleasure in augmenting his wrath; "and it is a comfort you don't seem to want a warming-pan at present, Mr. Jobson."

There was not, of course, the slightest foundation for the absurd story about the spurious heir to the throne. Some little excuse was given for the spread of such a tale by the mere fact that there had been delay in summoning the proper officials to be present at the birth. But despite all the pains Bishop Burnet takes to make the report seem trustworthy, it may be doubted whether any one whose opinion was worth having seriously believed in the story, even at the time, and it soon ceased to have any believers at all. But it was then accepted as an article of faith by a large proportion of the outer public; and the supposed Jesuit plot and the supposed warming-pan served as missiles with which to pelt the supporters of the Stuarts, until long after there had ceased to be the slightest chance of a Stuart restoration. This story of a spurious heir to a throne repeats itself at various intervals of history. The child of Napoleon the First and Maria Louisa was believed by many Legitimist partisans to be supposititious. In later days there were many intelligent persons in France firmly convinced that the unfortunate Prince Louis Napoleon, who was killed in Zululand, was not the son of the Empress of the French, but that he was the son of her sister, the Duchess of Alva, and that he was merely palmed off on the French people in order to secure the stability of the Bonapartist throne.

James Stuart was born, as we have said, on June 10, 1688, and was therefore in his twenty-sixth year at the time when this history begins. Soon after his birth his mother hurried with him to France to escape the coming troubles, and his father presently followed discrowned. He had led an unhappy life. He is described as tall, meagre, and melancholy. "Old Mr. Melancholy," he came to be called in a later day and hour. Although not strikingly like Charles the First or Charles the Second, he had unmis-



takably the Stuart aspect. Horace Walpole said of him, many years after : "Without the particular features of any Stuart, the Chevalier has the strong lines and fatality of air peculiar to them all." The words "fatality of air" describe very expressively that look of melancholy which all the Stuart features wore when in repose. The melancholy look represented an underlying habitual mood of melancholy or even despondency, which a close observer may read in the character of the "merry monarch" himself, for all his mirth and his dissipation, just as well as in that of Charles the First or of James the Second. It is strange that James Stuart should have made so faint an impression upon history and upon literature. Romance and poetry, which have done so much for his son "Bonnie Prince Charlie," have taken hardly any account of him. He figures in Thackeray's "Esmond," but the picture is not made very distinct, even by that master of portraiture. James Stuart had stronger qualities for good or evil than Thackeray seems to have found in him. Some of his contemporaries denied him the credit of man's ordinary courage ; he has even been accused of positive cowardice. But there does not seem to be the slightest ground for such an accusation. Studied with the severest eye, his various enterprises, and the manner in which he bore himself throughout them, would seem to prove that he had courage enough for any undertaking. Princes seldom show any want of physical courage. They are trained from their very birth to regard themselves as always on parade, and even if they should feel their hearts give way in presence of danger, they are not likely to allow it to be seen. It was not lack of personal bravery that marred the chances of James Stuart.

It is doing only bare justice to one whose character and career have met with little favour from history, contemporary or recent, to say that James might have made his way to the throne with comparative ease if he had consented to give up his religion and become a Protestant. It was again and again pressed upon him by English adherents, and even by statesmen in power, by Oxford and by Bolingbroke, that if he could not actually become a Protestant he should at

least pretend to become one, and give up all outward show of his devotion to the Catholic Church. James steadily and decisively refused to be guilty of any meanness so ignoble and detestable. His conduct in thus adhering to his convictions, even at the cost of a throne, has been contrasted with that of Henry the Fourth, who declared Paris to be "well worth a mass." But some injustice has been done to Henry the Fourth in regard to his conversion. Henry's great Protestant minister, Sully, urged him to become a Catholic openly, on the ground that he had always been a Catholic more or less in his heart. Sully gave Henry several evidences, drawn from his observation of Henry's own demeanour, to prove to him that his natural inclinations always led him towards the Catholic faith, commenting shrewdly on the fact that he had seen Henry cross himself more than once on the field of battle in the presence of danger. Thus, according to Sully, Henry the Fourth, in professing himself a Catholic, would be only following the bent of his own feelings. However that may be, it is still the fact that Henry the Fourth, by changing his profession of religion, succeeded in obtaining a crown, and that James the Chevalier, by refusing to hear of such a change, lost his best chance of a throne.

What were Anne's own wishes with regard to the succession? There cannot be much doubt as to the way her personal feelings went. There is a history of the reign of Queen Anne written by Dr. Thomas Somerville, "one of His Majesty's Chaplains in Ordinary," and published in 1798, with a dedication "by permission" to the King. It is called on its title-page, "The History of Great Britain during the Reign of Queen Anne, with a Dissertation concerning the Danger of the Protestant Succession." Such an author, writing comparatively soon after the events, and in a book dedicated to the reigning King, was not likely to do any conscious injustice to the memory of Queen Anne, and was especially likely to take a fair view of the influence which her personal inclinations were calculated to have on the succession. "The loss," says Dr. Somerville, "of all her children bore the aspect of an angry Providence, adjusting punishment to the nature and quality of her offence. Wounded

in spirit, and prone to superstition, she naturally thought of the restitution of the crown to her brother as the only atonement she could make to the memory of her injured father." This feeling might have ripened into action with her but for her constitutional timidity. There would undoubtedly have been dangers, obvious to even the bravest or the most reckless, in an attempt just then to alter the succession; but Anne saw those dangers "in the most terrific form, and recoiled with horror from the sight." Moreover, she had a constitutional objection, as strong as that of Queen Elizabeth herself, to the presence of an intended successor near her throne. "She trembled," says Somerville, "at the idea of the presence of a successor, whoever he might be; and the residence of her own brother in England was not less dreadful to her than that of the Electoral Prince." But had she lived longer she would have found herself constrained to put up with the presence of either one claimant or the other. Her ministers, whoever they might be, would surely have seen the imperative necessity of bringing over to England the man whom the Queen and they had determined to present to the English people as her successor. In such an event as that, and most assuredly if men like Bolingbroke had been in power, it may be taken for granted that the Queen would have preferred her own brother, a Stuart, to the Electoral Prince of Hanover. "What the consequence might have been, if the Queen had survived," says Somerville, "is merely a matter of conjecture; but we may pronounce, with some degree of assurance, that the Protestant interest would have been exposed to more certain and to more imminent dangers than ever had threatened it before at any period since the Revolution." This seems a reasonable and just assertion. If Anne had lived much longer, it is possible that England might have seen a James the Third.



## CHAPTER II

## PARTIES AND LEADERS

THE closing months of Queen Anne's reign were occupied by Whigs and Tories, and indeed by Anne herself, in the invention and conduct of intrigues about the succession. The Queen herself, with the grave opening before her, kept her fading eyes turned, not to the world she was about to enter, but to the world she was about to leave. She was thinking much more about the future of her throne than about her own soul and future state. The Whigs were quite ready to maintain the Hanoverian succession by force. They did not expect to be able to carry matters easily, and they were ready to encounter a civil war. Their belief seems to have been that they, and not their opponents, would have to strike the blow, and they had already summoned the Duke of Marlborough from his retirement in Flanders to take the lead in their movement. Having Marlborough they knew that they would have the army. On the other hand, if Bolingbroke and the Tories really had any actual hope of a restoration of the Stuarts, it is certain that up to the last moment they had made no substantial preparations to accomplish their object.

The Whigs and Tories divided between them whatever political force there was in English society. Outside both parties lay a considerable section of people who did not distinctly belong to the one faction or the other, but were ready to incline now to this and now to that, according as the conditions of the hour might inspire them. Outside these again, and far outnumbering these and all others combined, was the great mass of the English people—hard-working, much-suffering, poor, patient, and almost absolutely indifferent to changes in Governments and the humours and struggles of parties. "These wrangling jars of Whig and Tory," says Swift, "are stale and old as Troy-town story." But if the principles were old the titles of the parties were new. Steele, in 1710, published in "The

'Tatler" a letter from Pasquin of Rome to Isaac Bickerstaff, asking for "an account of those two religious orders which have lately sprung up amongst you, the Whigs and the Tories." Steele declared that you could not come even among women "but you find them divided into Whig and Tory." It was like the famous lawsuit in Abdera, alluded to by Lucian, and amplified by Wieland, concerning the ownership of the ass's shadow, on which all the Abderites took sides, and every one was either a "Shadow" or an "Ass."

Various explanations have been given of these titles Whig and Tory. Titus Oates applied the term "Tory," which then signified an Irish robber, to those who would not believe in his Popish plot, and the name gradually became extended to all who were supposed to have sympathy with the Catholic Duke of York. The word "Whig" first came up during the Cameronian rising, when it was applied to the Scotch Presbyterians, and is derived by some from the whey which they habitually drank, and by others from a word "whiggam," used by the Western Scottish drovers.

The Whigs and the Tories represent in the main not only two political doctrines, but two different feelings in the human mind. The natural tendency of some men is to regard political liberty as of more importance than political authority, and of other men to think that the maintenance of authority is the first object to be secured, and that only so much of individual liberty is to be conceded as will not interfere with authority's strictest exercise. Roughly speaking, the Tories were for authority, and the Whigs for liberty. The Tories naturally held to the principle of the monarchy and of the State Church; the Whigs were inclined to the supremacy of Parliament, and something like an approach to religious equality. Up to this time at least the Tory party still accepted the theory of the Divine origin of the King's supremacy. The Whigs were even then the advocates of a constitutional system, and held that the people at large are the source of monarchical power. To the one set of men the Sovereign was a divinely appointed ruler; to the other, he was the



hereditary chief of the realm, having the source of his authority in popular election. The Tories as the Church party disliked the Dissenters even more than they disliked the Roman Catholics. The Whigs were even then inclined to regard the Church as a branch of the Civil Service, to adopt a much more modern phrase, and they were in favour of extending freedom of worship to Dissenters, and in a certain sense to Roman Catholics. According to Bishop Burnet, it was in the reign of Queen Anne that the distinction between High Church and Low Church first marked itself out, and we find almost as a natural necessity that the High Church men were Tories, and the Low Church men were Whigs. Then as now the chief strength of the Tories was found in the country, and not in the large towns. So far as town populations were concerned, the Tories were proportionately strongest where the borough was smallest. The great bulk of the agricultural population, so far as it had definite political feelings, was distinctly Tory. The strength of the Whigs lay in the manufacturing towns and the great ports. London was at that time much stronger in its Liberal political sentiments than it has been more recently. The moneyed interest, the bankers, the merchants, were attached to the Whig party. Many peers and bishops were Whigs, but they were chiefly the peers and bishops who owed their appointments to William the Third. The French envoy, D'Iberville, at this time describes the Whigs as having at their command the best purses, the best swords, the ablest heads, and the handsomest women. The Tory party was strong at the University of Oxford; the Whig party was in greater force at Cambridge. Both Whigs and Tories, however, were in a somewhat subdued condition of mind about the time that Anne's reign was closing. Neither party as a whole was inclined to push its political principles to anything like a logical extreme. Whigs and Tories alike were practically satisfied with the form which the English governing system had assumed after the Revolution of 1688. Neither party was inclined for another revolution. The Civil War had carried the Whig principle a little too far for the Whigs. The Restoration had brought a certain

amount of scandal on sovereign authority and the principle of Divine Right. The minds of men were settling down into willingness for a compromise. There were of course amongst the Tories the extreme men so pledged to the restoration of the Stuarts that they would have moved heaven and earth, at all events they would have convulsed England, for the sake of bringing them back. These men constituted what would now be called in the language of French politics the Extreme Right of the Tory party; they would become of importance at any hour when some actual movement was made from the outside to restore the Stuarts. Such a movement would of course have carried with it and with them the great bulk of the now quiescent Tory party; but in the meantime, and until some such movement was made, the Jacobite section of the Tories was not in a condition to be active or influential, and was not a serious difficulty in the way of the Hanoverian succession.

The Whigs had great advantages on their side. They had a clear principle to start with. The constitutional errors and excesses of the Stuarts had forced on the mind of England a recognition of the two or three main principles of civil and religious liberty. The Whigs knew what they wanted better than the Tories did, and the ends which the Whigs proposed to gain were attainable, while those which the Tories set out for themselves were to a great extent lost in dreamland. The uncertainty and vagueness of many of the Tory aims made some of the Tories themselves only half earnest in their purposes. Many a Tory who talked as loudly as his brothers about the King having his own again, and who toasted "the King over the water" as freely as they, had in the bottom of his heart very little real anxiety to see a rebellion ending in a Stuart restoration. But, on the other hand, the Whigs could strive with all their might and main to carry out their principles in Church and State without the responsibility of plunging the country into rebellion, and without any dread of seeing their projects melt away into visions and chimeras. A great band of landed proprietors formed the leaders of the Whigs. Times have changed since then, and the representatives of some of

those great houses which then led the Whig party have passed or glided insensibly into the ranks of the Tories ; but the main reason for this is because a Tory of our day represents fairly enough, in certain political aspects, the Whig of the days of Queen Anne. A new departure has taken place in England since that time : the Radical party has come into existence, with political principles and watchwords quite different from those of the early Whigs. Some of the Whig houses, not many, have gone with the forward movement ; some have remained behind, and so lapsed almost insensibly into the Tory quarter. But at the close of Queen Anne's reign all the great leading Whigs stood well together. They understood better than the Tories the necessity of obtaining superior influence in the House of Commons. They even contrived at that time to secure the majority of the county constituencies, while they had naturally the majority of the commercial class on their side. Then, as in later days, the vast wealth of the Whig families was spent unstintingly, and it may be said unblushingly, in securing the possession of the small constituencies—the constituencies which were only to be had by lavish bribery. Then, as afterwards, there was perceptible among the Whigs a strange combination of dignity and of meanness, of great principles and of somewhat degraded practices. They had high purposes ; they recognised noble principles, and they held to them ; they were for political liberty as they then understood it, and they were for religious equality—for such approach at least to religious equality as had then come to be sanctioned by responsible politicians in England. They were ready to make great sacrifices in the defence of their political creed. But the principles and purposes with which they started, and to which they kept, did not succeed in purifying and ennobling all their parliamentary strategy and political conduct. They intrigued, they bribed, they bought, they cajoled, they paltered, they threatened, they made unsparing use of money and of power, they employed every art to carry out high and national purposes which the most unscrupulous cabal could have used to secure the attainment of selfish and ignoble ends. Their enemies had put



one great advantage into their hands. The conduct of Bolingbroke and of Oxford during recent years had left the Whigs the sole representatives of constitutional liberty.

The two great political parties hated and denounced each other with a ferocity hardly known before, and hardly possible in our later times. The Whigs vituperated the Tories as rebels and traitors; the Tories cried out against the Whigs as the enemies of religion and the opponents of "the true Church of England." Many a ballad of that time described the Whigs as men whose object it was to destroy both mitre and crown, to introduce anarchy once again, as they had done in the days of Oliver Cromwell. The Whig balladists retorted by describing the Tories as men who were engaged in trying to bring in "Perkin" from France, and prophesied the halter as a reward of their leading statesmen. In truth, the bitterness of that hour was very earnest; most of the men on both sides meant what they said. Either side, if it had been in complete preponderance, would probably have had very little scruple in disposing of its leading enemies by means of the halter or the prison. It was for the time not so much a struggle of political parties as a struggle of hostile armies. The men were serious and savage because the crisis was serious and portentous. The chances of an hour might make a man a Prime Minister or a prisoner. Bolingbroke soon after was in exile, and Walpole at the head of the administration. The slightest chance, the merest accident, might have sent Walpole into exile, and put Bolingbroke at the head of the state.

## CHAPTER III

### "LOST FOR WANT OF SPIRIT"

WHEN Bolingbroke found himself in full power he began at once to open the way for some attempt at the restoration of the Stuart dynasty. He put influential Jacobites into important offices in England and Scotland; he made the



Duke of Ormond Warden of the Cinque Ports, that authority covering exactly the stretch of coast at some point of which it might be expected that James Stuart would land if he were to make an attempt for the crown at all. Ormond was a weak and vain man, but he was a man of personal integrity. He had been sent out to Flanders to succeed the greatest commander of the age as captain-general of the allied armies there, and he had naturally played a poor and even a ridiculous part. The Jacobites in England still, however, held him in much honour, identified his name, no one exactly knew why, with the cause of High Church, and elected him the hero and the leader of the movement for the restoration of the exiled family. Bolingbroke committed Scotland to the care of the Earl of Mar, a Jacobite, a personal friend of James Stuart, and a votary of High Church. It can hardly be supposed that in making such an appointment Bolingbroke had not in his mind the possibility of a rising of the Highland clans against the Hanoverian succession. But it is none the less evident that Bolingbroke was as usual thinking far more of himself than of his party, and that his preparations were made not so much with a view to restoring the Stuarts, as with the object of securing himself against any chance that might befall.

Had Bolingbroke been resolved in his heart to bring back the Stuarts, had he been ready, as many other men were, to risk all in that cause, to stand or fall by it, he might, so far as one can see, have been successful. On the whole the majority of the English people were in favour of the Stuarts. Certainly the majority would have preferred a Stuart to the dreaded and disliked German Prince from Herrenhausen. For many years the birthday of the Stuart Prince had been celebrated as openly and as enthusiastically in English cities as if it were the birthday of the reigning sovereign. James's adherents were everywhere: in the court, in the camp, on the bench, in Parliament, in the drawing-rooms, the coffee-houses, and the streets. Bolingbroke had only to present him at a critical moment, and say "Here is your King," and James Stuart would have been King. Such a crisis came in France in our own days.

There was a moment, after the fall of the Second Empire, when the Count de Chambord had only to present himself in Versailles in order to be accepted as King of France, not King of the French. But the Count de Chambord put away his chance deliberately; he would not consent to give up the white flag of legitimacy and accept the tricolor. He acted on principle, knowing the forfeit of his decision. The chances of James Stuart were frittered away in half-heartedness, insincerity, and folly. While Bolingbroke and his confederates were caballing and counselling, and paltering and drinking, the Whig statesmen were maturing their plans, and when the moment came for action it found them ready to act.

The time of waiting was not long; Anne sank into death on August 1, 1714, and the heralds proclaimed that "the high and mighty Prince George, Elector of Brunswick and Lüneburg, is, by the death of Queen Anne of blessed memory, become our lawful and rightful liege lord, King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith." This "King of France" was lucky enough not to come to his throne until the conclusion of a long war against the King of France who lived in Versailles. The "Defender of the Faith" was just now making convenient arrangements that his mistresses should follow him as speedily as possible when he should have to take his unwilling way to his new dominions.

Parliament assembled, and on August 5 the Commons were summoned to the Bar of the House of Lords, and the Lord Chancellor made a speech in the name of the Lords of the Regency. He told the Lords and Commons that the Privy Council appointed by George, Elector of Hanover, had proclaimed that Prince as the lawful and rightful sovereign of these realms. Both Houses agreed to send addresses to the King, expressing their duty and affection; and the House of Commons passed a Bill granting to his Majesty the same civil list as that which Queen Anne had enjoyed, but with additional clauses for the payment of arrears due to the Hanoverian troops who had been in the service of Great Britain. The Lord Chancellor, who had just addressed the House of Lords and the Commoners

standing at the Bar, was himself a remarkable illustration of the politics and the principles of that age. Simon Harcourt had been Lord Chancellor in the later years of Queen Anne's life. His appointment ended with her death; but he was reappointed by the Lords of the Regency in the name of the new sovereign, and he was again sworn in as Lord Chancellor on August 3, 1714, "in Court at his house aforesaid, Lincoln's Inn Fields, *Anno Primo Georgii Regis.*" He was one of the Lords Justices by virtue of his office, and, as such, had already taken the oath of allegiance to the new sovereign and of abjuration to James. Lord Harcourt had been throughout his whole career not only a very devoted Tory, but in later years a positive Jacobite. He was a highly accomplished speaker, a man of great culture, and a lawyer of considerable, if not pre-eminent, attainments. He was still comparatively young for a public man of such position. Born in 1660, he entered Pembroke College, Oxford, in 1675, was admitted to the Inner Temple in 1676, and called to the Bar in 1683. He became member of Parliament for Abingdon in 1690, and soon rose to great distinction in the House of Commons as well as at the Bar. He conducted the impeachment of the great Lord Somers, and was knighted and made Solicitor-General by Anne in 1702. He became Attorney-General shortly after. He conducted in 1703 the prosecution of Defoe for his famous satirical tract, "The Shortest Way with the Dissenters." Harcourt threw himself into the prosecution with the fervour and the bitterness of a sectary and a partisan. He made a most vehement and envenomed speech against Defoe; he endeavoured to stir up every religious prejudice and passion in favour of the prosecution. Coke had scarcely shown more of the animosity of a partisan in prosecuting Raleigh than Simon Harcourt did in prosecuting Defoe. In 1709-10 Harcourt was the leading counsel for Sacheverell, and received the Great Seal in 1710, becoming, as the phrase then was, "Lord Keeper of the Great Seal of Great Britain." A whole year, wanting only a few days, passed before he was raised to the peerage as Lord Harcourt. He acted as Speaker of the House of Lords before he became



a peer and a member of the House, and even had on one occasion to express on behalf of the Peers their thanks to Lord Peterborough for his services in Spain. In 1713 he became Lord Chancellor of England. During all this time he had been a most devoted adherent of the Stuarts, and during the later period he was an open and avowed Jacobite. He had opposed strongly the oaths of abjuration which now, as Lord Chief Justice, he had both taken and administered. Almost his first conspicuous act as a member of Parliament was to protest against the Bill which required the oath of abjuration of James and his descendants, and he maintained consistently the same principles and the same policy till the death of Queen Anne. There can be no doubt that if just then any movement had been made on behalf of the Stuarts with the slightest chance of success, Lord Chancellor Harcourt would have thrown himself into it heart and soul. Nevertheless, he took the oath of allegiance and the oath of abjuration; he professed to be a loyal subject of the King whose person and principles he despised and detested, and he swore to abjure for ever all adhesion to that dynasty which with all his heart he would have striven, if he could, to restore to the throne of England. Lord Campbell, in his "Lives of the Lord Chancellors," says of Harcourt, "I do not consider his efforts to restore the exiled Stuarts morally inconsistent with the engagements into which he had entered to the existing Government, and although there were loud complaints against him for at last sending in his adhesion to the House of Hanover, it should be recollected that the cause of the Stuarts had then become desperate, and that instead of betraying he did everything in his power to screen his old associates." The cause of the Stuarts had not become, even then, so utterly desperate as to prevent many brave men from laying down their lives for it. Thirty years had to pass away before the last blow was struck for that cause of the Stuarts which Harcourt by solemn oath abjured for ever. Such credit as he is entitled to have, because he protected rather than betrayed his old associates, we are free to give him; and it stands a significant illustration of the political morality of the time that such



comparative credit is all that his enthusiastic biographer ventures to claim for him.

The House of Lords had then two hundred and seven members, many of whom, being Catholics, were not permitted to take any part in public business. That number of Peers is about in just proportion to the population of England, as it was then, when compared with the Peers and the population of England at present. In the House of Commons there were at the same time five hundred and fifty-eight members. England sent in five hundred and thirteen, and Scotland, which had lately accepted the union, returned forty-five. It need hardly be said that at that time Ireland had her own Parliament, and sent no members to Westminster. A great number of the county family names in the House of Commons were the same as those which we see at present. The Stanhopes, the Lowthers, the Lawsons, the Herberts, the Harcourts, the Cowpers, the Fitzwilliams, the Cecils, the Grevilles; all these, and many others, were represented in Parliament then as they are represented in Parliament now. Then, as more lately, the small boroughs had the credit of returning, mostly of course through family influence, men of eminence other than political, who happened to sit in the House of Commons. Steele sat for Stockbridge in "Southampton County," as Hampshire was then always called, Addison for Malmesbury, Prior for East Grinstead. There were no reports of the debates, nor printed lists of the divisions. Questions of foreign policy were sometimes discussed with doors strictly closed against all strangers, just as similar questions are occasionally, and not infrequently, discussed in the Senate of the United States at present. The pamphlet supplied in some measure the place of the newspaper report and the newspaper leading article. Some twelve years later than this the brilliant pen of Bolingbroke who, if he had lived at a period nearer to our own, might have been an unrivalled writer of leading articles, was able to obtain for the series of pamphlets called "The Craftsman" a circulation greater than that ever enjoyed by "The Spectator." Pulteney co-operated with him for a time in the work. Steele had been expelled from the House of

Commons for his pamphlet "The Crisis." The caricature which played so important a part in political controversy all through the reigns of the Georges had just come into recognised existence. Countless caricatures of Bolingbroke, of Walpole, of Shrewsbury, of Marlborough, began to fly about London. Scurrilous ballads were in great demand, nor was the supply inadequate to the demand.

One of the most successful of these compositions described the return of the Duke of Marlborough to London. On the very day of the Queen's death Marlborough landed at Dover. He came quickly on to London, and there, according to the descriptions given by his admirers, he was received like a restored sovereign returning to his throne. A procession of two hundred gentlemen on horseback met him on the road to London, and the procession was joined shortly after by a long train of carriages. As he entered London the enthusiasm deepened with every foot of the way; the streets were lined with crowds of applauding admirers. Marlborough's carriage broke down near Temple Bar, and he had to exchange it for another. The little incident was only a new cause for demonstrations of enthusiasm. It was a fresh delight to see the hero more nearly than he could be seen through his carriage windows. It was something to have delayed him for a moment, and to have compelled him to stand amongst the crowd of those who were pressing round to express their homage. This was the Whig description. According to Tory accounts Marlborough was more hissed than huzzaed, and at Temple Bar the hissing was loudest. The work of the historian would be comparatively easy if eye-witnesses could only agree as to any, even the most important, facts.

Enthusiastic Whig pamphleteers called upon their countrymen to love and honour their invincible hero, and declared that the wretch would be esteemed a disgrace to humanity, and should be transmitted to posterity with infamy, who would dare to use his tongue or pen against him. Such wretches, however, were found, and did not seem in the least to dread the infamy which was promised them. The scurrilous ballad of which we have already spoken was by one Ned Ward, a publican and rhymester, and

it pictured the entry of the Duke in verses after the fashion of Hudibras. It depicted the procession as made up of—

Frightful troops of thin-jawed zealots,  
Curs'd enemies to kings and prelates;

and declared that those “champions of religious errors” made London seem

As if the Prince of Terrors  
Was coming with his dismal train  
To plague the city once again.

The memory of what the Plague had done in London was still green enough to give bitter force to this allusion.

Marlborough could have afforded to despise what Hotspur calls the “metre-ballad-mongers,” but his pride received a check and chill not easily to be got over. When fairly rid of his enthusiastic followers and admirers, he went to the House of Lords almost at once, and took the oaths; but he did not remain there. In truth, he soon found himself bitterly disappointed; not with the people—they could not have been more enthusiastic than they were—but with the new ruling power. Immediately after the death of the Queen, and even before the proclamation of the new Sovereign had taken place, the Hanoverian resident in London handed to the Privy Council a letter from George, in George’s own handwriting, naming the men who were to act in combination with the seven great officers of State as Lords Justices. The power to make this nomination was provided for George by the Regency Act. This document contained the names of eighteen of the principal Whig peers; the Duke of Shrewsbury, the Duke of Somerset, and the Duke of Argyll were amongst them; so, too, were Lords Cowper, Halifax, and Townshend. It was noted with wonder that the illustrious name of Somers did not appear on the list, nor did that of Marlborough nor that of Marlborough’s son-in-law, Lord Sunderland. It is likely that the omission of these names was only made in the first instance because George and his advisers were somewhat afraid of his getting into the hands of a sort of dictatorship—a dictatorship in commission as it might be called—made up of three or four influential men. The King afterwards hastened to show every atten-



tion to Marlborough and Somers and Sunderland, and he soon restored Marlborough to all his public offices. But George seems to have had a profound and a very well-justified distrust of Marlborough. Though he honoured him with marks of respect and attention, though he restored him to the great position he had held in the State, yet the King never allowed Marlborough to suppose that he really had regained his former influence in court and political life. Marlborough was shelved, and he already knew it, and bitterly complained of it.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE KING COMES

"THE old town of Hanover," says Thackeray, "must look still pretty much as in the time when George Louis left it. The gardens and pavilions of Herrenhausen are scarce changed since the day when the stout old Electress Sophia fell down in her last walk there, preceding but by a few weeks to the tomb James the Second's daughter, whose death made way for the Brunswick Stuarts in England. . . . You may see at Herrenhausen the very rustic theatre in which the Platens danced and performed masques and sang before the Elector and his sons. There are the very fauns and dryads of stone still glimmering through the branches, still grinning and piping their ditties of no tone, as in the days when painted nymphs hung garlands round them, appeared under their leafy arcades with gilt crooks, guiding rams with gilt horns, descended from 'machines' in the guise of Diana or Minerva, and delivered immense allegorical compliments to the princes returned home from the campaign." Herrenhausen indeed is changed but little since those days of which Thackeray speaks. But although not many years have passed since Thackeray went to visit Hanover before delivering his lectures on "The Four Georges," Hanover itself has undergone much alteration. If one of the Georges could now return to his



ancestral capital he would indeed be bewildered at the great new squares, the rows of tall vast shops and warehouses, the spacious railway station, penetrated to every corner at night by the keen electric light. But in passing from Hanover to Herrenhausen one goes back, in a short drive, from the days of the Emperor William of Germany to the days of George the Elector. Herrenhausen, the favourite residence of the Electors of Hanover, is but a short distance from the capital. Thackeray speaks of it as an ugly place, and it certainly has not many claims to the picturesque. But it is full of a certain curious half-melancholy interest, and well fitted to be the cradle and the home of a decaying Hanoverian dynasty. In its galleries one may spend many an hour, not unprofitably, in studying the faces of all the men and women who are famous, notorious, or infamous in connection with the history of Hanover. The story of that dynasty has more than one episode not unlike that of the unfortunate Sophia Dorothea and Königsmark, her lover. A good many grim legends haunt the place and give interest to some of the faces, otherwise insipid enough, which look out of the heavy frames and the formal court dresses of the picture gallery.

On the evening of August 5, 1714, four days after Queen Anne's death, Lord Clarendon, the lately appointed English Minister at the Court of Hanover, set out for the palace of Herrenhausen to bear to the new King of Great Britain the tidings of Queen Anne's death. About two o'clock in the morning he entered the royal apartments of the ungenial and sleepy George, and, kneeling, did homage to him as King of Great Britain. George took the announcement of his new rank without even a semblance of gratification. He had made up his mind to endure it, and that was all. He was too stolid, or lazy, or sincere to affect the slightest personal interest in the news. He lingered in Hanover as long as he decently could, and sauntered for many a day through the prim, dull, and orderly walks of Herrenhausen. He behaved very much in the fashion of the convict in Prior's poem, who, when the cart was ready and the halter adjusted,

Often took leave but seemed loth to depart.

August 31 had arrived before George began his journey to England. But he did one or two good-natured things before leaving Hanover: he ordered the abolition of certain duties on provisions, and he had the insolvent debtors throughout the Electorate discharged from custody. On September 5 he reached the Hague, and here another stoppage took place. The exertion of travelling from Hanover to the Hague had been so great that George apparently required a respite from September 5 until the 16th. On the 16th he embarked, and reached Greenwich two days after. He was accompanied to England by his two leading favourites—the ladies whose charms we have already described. For many days after his arrival in London the King did little but lament his exile from his beloved Herrenhausen, and tell every one he met how cordially he disliked England, its people, and its ways. Fortunately perhaps in this respect for the popularity of his Majesty, George's audience was necessarily limited. He spoke no English, and hardly any of those who surrounded him could speak German, while some of his Ministers did not even speak French. Sir Robert Walpole tried to get on with him by talking Latin. Even the English oysters George could not abide; he grumbled long at their queer taste, their want of flavour, and it was some time before his devoted attendants discovered that their monarch liked stale oysters with a good strong rankness about them. No time was lost, when this important discovery had been made, in procuring oysters to the taste of the King, and one of George's objections to the throne of England was easily removed.

There was naturally great curiosity to see the King, and a writer of the time gives an amusing account of the efforts made to obtain a sight of him. "A certain person has paid several guineas for the benefit of Cheapside conduit, and another has almost given twenty years' purchase for a shed in Stocks Market. Some lay out great sums in shop windows, others sell lottery tickets to hire cobblers' stalls, and here and there a vintner has received earnest for the use of his sign-post. King Charles the Second's horse at the aforesaid market is to carry double, and His Majesty

at Charing Cross is to ride between two draymen. Some have made interest to climb chimneys, and others to be exalted to the airy station of a steeple."

The princely pageant which people were so eager to see lives still in a print issued by "Tim. Jordan and Tho. Bakenwell at Ye Golden Lion in Fleet Street." We are thus gladdened with a sight of the splendid procession winding its way through St. James's Park to St. James's Palace. There are musketeers and trumpeters on horse-back; there are courtly gentlemen on horse and a-foot, and great lumbering, gilded, gaudily-bedizened carriages with four and six steeds, and more trumpeters—on foot this time—and pursuivants and heralds—George was fond of heralds, and created two of his own, Hanover and Gloucester—and then the royal carriage, with its eight prancing horses, and the Elector of Hanover and King of England inside, with his hand to his heart, and still more soldiers following, both horse and foot, and, of course, a loyal populace everywhere waving their three-cornered hats and huzzaing with all their might.

The day of the entry was not without its element of tragedy. In the crowd Colonel Chudleigh called Mr. Charles Aldworth, M.P. for New Windsor, a Jacobite. There was a quarrel, the gentlemen went to Marylebone Fields, exchanged a few passes, and Mr. Aldworth was almost immediately killed. This was no great wonder, for we learn, in a letter from Lord Berkeley of Stratton, preserved in the Wentworth Papers, describing the duel, that Mr. Aldworth had such a weakness in his arms from childhood that he could not stretch them out, a fact, Lord Berkeley hints, by no means unknown to his adversary.

Horace Walpole has left a description of King George which is worth citation. "The person of the King," he says, "is perfect in my memory as if I saw him yesterday; it was that of an elderly man, rather pale, and exactly like his pictures and coins; not tall, of an aspect rather good than august, with a dark tiewig, a plain coat, waistcoat and breeches of snuff-coloured cloth, with stockings of the same colour, and a blue riband over all." George was fond of heavy dining and heavy drinking. He often dined at Sir



Robert Walpole's, at Richmond Hill, where he used to drink so much punch that even the Duchess of Kendal endeavoured to restrain him, and received in return some coarse admonition in German. He was shy and reserved in general, and he detested all the troublesome display of royalty. He hated going to the theatre in state, and he did not even care to show himself in the front of the royal box; he preferred to sit in another and less conspicuous box with the Duchess of Kendal and Lady Walsingham. On the whole, it would seem as if the inclination of the English people for the Hanoverian dynasty was about to be tried by the severest test that fate could well ordain. A dull, stolid, and profligate king, fond of drink and of low conversation, without dignity of appearance or manner, without sympathy of any kind with the English people and English ways, and without the slightest knowledge of the English language, was suddenly thrust upon the people and proclaimed their King. Fortunately for the Hanoverian dynasty, the English people, as a whole, had grown into a mood of comparative indifference as to who should rule them so long as they were let alone. It was impossible that a strong feeling of loyalty to any House should burn just then in the breast of the great majority of the English people. Those who were devoted to the Stuarts and those who detested the Stuarts felt strongly on the subject this way or that, and they would therefore admire or detest King George, according to their previously acquired political principles. But to the ordinary Englishman it only seemed that England had lately been trying a variety of political systems and a variety of rulers; that one seemed to succeed hardly better than the other; that so long as no great breakdown in the system took place, it mattered little whether a Stuart or a Brunswick was in temporary possession of the throne. Within a comparatively short space of time the English Parliament had deposed Charles the First; the Protectorate had been tried under Cromwell; the Restoration had been brought about by the adroitness of Monk; James the Second, a Catholic, had come to the throne, and had been driven off the throne by William the Third; William had established a new dynasty and a new



system, which was no sooner established than it had to be succeeded by the introduction to the throne of one of the daughters of the displaced House of Stuart. England had not had time to become attached, or even reconciled, to any of these succeeding rulers, and the English people in general—the English people outside the circle of courts and Parliament and politics—were well satisfied when George came to the throne to let any one wear the crown who did not make himself and his system absolutely intolerable to the nation.

The old-fashioned, romantic principle of personal loyalty, unconditional loyalty—the loyalty of Divine Right—was already languishing unto death. It was now seen for the last time in effective contrast with what we may call the modern principle of loyalty. The modern principle of loyalty to a sovereign is that which, having decided in favour of monarchical government and of an hereditary succession, resolves to abide by that choice, and for the sake of the principle and of the country to pay all respect and homage to the person of the chosen ruler. But the loyalty which still clung to the fading fortunes of the Stuarts was very different from this, and came into direct contrast with the feeling shown by the majority of the people of England towards the House of Hanover. Though faults and weaknesses beyond number, weaknesses which were even worse than actual faults, tainted the character and corroded the moral fibre of every successive Stuart prince, the devotees of personal loyalty still clung with sentiment and with passion to the surviving representatives of the fallen dynasty. Poets and balladists, singers in the streets and singers on the mountain-side, were even in these early days of George the First inspired with songs of loyal homage in favour of the son of James the Second. Men and women in thousands, not only among the wild romantic hills of Scotland, but in prosaic North of England towns, and yet more prosaic London streets and alleys, were ready, if the occasion offered, to die for the Stuart cause. Despite the evidence of their own senses, men and women would still endow any representative of the Stuarts with all the virtues and talents and graces that might

become an ideal prince of romance. No one thought in this way of the successors of William the Third. No one had had any particular admiration for Queen Anne, either as a sovereign or as a woman; nobody pretended to feel any thrill of sentimental emotion towards portly, stolid, sensual George the First. About the King personally hardly anybody cared anything. The mass of the English people who accepted him and adhered to him did so because they understood that he represented a certain quiet, homely principle in politics which would secure tranquillity and stability to the country. They did not ask of him that he should be noble, or gifted, or dignified, or even virtuous. They asked of him two things in especial: first, that he would maintain a steady system of government; and next, that he would in general let the country alone. This is the feeling which must be taken into account if we would understand how it came to pass that the English people so contentedly accepted a Sovereign like George the First. The explanation is not to be found merely in the fact that the Stuarts, as a race, had discredited themselves hopelessly with the moral sentiment of the people of England. The very worst of the Stuarts, Charles the Second, was not any worse as regards moral character than George the First, or than some of the Georges who followed him. In education and in mental capacity he was far superior to any of the Georges. There were many qualities in Charles the Second which, if his fatal love of ease and of amusement could have been kept under control, might have made him a successful sovereign, and which, were he in private life, would undoubtedly have made him an eminent man. But the truth is that the old feeling of blind unconditional homage to the Sovereign was dying out; it was dying of inanition and old age and natural decay. Other and stronger forces in political thought were coming up to jostle it aside, even before its death hour, and to occupy its place. A King was to be in England for the future a respected and honoured chief magistrate appointed for life and to hereditary office. This new condition of things influenced the feelings and conduct of hundreds of thousands of persons who were not themselves conscious of the

change. This was one great reason why George the First was so easily accepted by the country. The King was in future to be a business King, and not a King of sentiment and romance.

## CHAPTER V

### WHAT THE KING CAME TO

THE population of these islands at the close of the reign of Queen Anne was probably not more than one-fifth of its present amount. It is not easy to arrive at a precise knowledge with regard to the number of the inhabitants of England at that time, because there was no census taken until 1801. We have, therefore, to be content with calculations founded on the number of houses that paid certain taxes, and on the register of deaths. This is of course not a very exact way of getting at the result, but it enables us to form a tolerably fair general estimate. According to these calculations, then, the population of England and Wales together was something like five millions and a half. The population of Ireland at the same time appears to have been about two millions ; that of Scotland little more than one. But the distribution of the population of these countries was very different then from that of the present day. Now the great cities and towns form the numerical strength of England and Scotland at least, but at that time the agricultural districts had a much larger proportion of the population than the towns could boast of. London was then considered a vast and enormous city, but it was only a hamlet when compared with the London which we know. Even then it absorbed more than one-tenth of the whole population of England and Wales. At the beginning of the reign of King George the First, London had a population of about seven hundred thousand, and it is a fact worthy of notice, that rapidly as the population of England has grown between that time and this, the growth of the metropolis has been even greater in proportion.



The City and Westminster were, at the beginning of George's reign and for long after, two distinct and separate towns; between them still lay many wide spaces on which men were only beginning to build houses. Fashion was already moving westward in the metropolis, obeying that curious impulse which seems to prevail in all modern cities, and which makes the West End as eagerly sought after in Paris, in Edinburgh, and in New York, as in London. The life of London centred in St. Paul's and the Exchange; that of Westminster in the Court and the Houses of Parliament. All around the old Houses of Parliament were lanes, squares, streets, and gateways covering the wide spaces and broad thoroughfares with which we are familiar. Between Parliament Buildings and the two churches of St. Peter and St. Margaret ran a narrow, densely crowded street, known as St. Margaret's Lane. The spot where Parliament Street now opens into Bridge Street was part of an uninterrupted row of houses running down to the water gate by the river. The market house of the old Woollen Market stood just where Westminster Bridge begins. The Parliament Houses themselves are as much changed as their surroundings. St. Stephen's Gallery now occupies the site of St. Stephen's Chapel, where the Commons used to sit. Westminster Hall had rows of little shops or booths ranged all along each wall inside; they had been there for generations, and they certainly did not add to either the beauty or the safety of the ancient hall. In the early part of the seventeenth century some of them took fire and came near to laying in ashes one of the oldest occupied buildings in the world. Luckily, however, the fire was put out with slight damage, but the dangerous little shops were suffered to remain then and for long after.

The Lesser London of that day lives for us in contemporary engravings, in the pages of "The Spectator" and "The Tatler," in the poems of Swift and Pope, in the pictures of Hogarth. Hogarth's men and women belong indeed to a later generation than the generation which Bolingbroke dazzled, and Marlborough deceived, and Arbuthnot satirised, and Steele made merry over. But it is only the men and women who are different; the background remains the



same. New actors have taken the parts ; the costumes are somewhat altered, but the scenes are scarcely changed. There may be a steeple more or a signboard less, in the streets that Hogarth drew, than there were when Addison walked them, but practically they are the same, and remained the same for a still later generation. Maps of the time show us how curiously small London was. There is open country to the north just beyond Bloomsbury Square ; Sadler's Wells is out in the country, so is St. Pancras, so is Tottenham Court, so is Marylebone. At the east Stepney lies far away, a distant hamlet. Beyond Hanover Square to the west stretch fields again, where Tyburn Road became the road to Oxford. There is very little of London south of the river.

The best part of the political and social life of this small London was practically lived in the still smaller area of St. James's, a term which generally includes rather more than is contained within the strict limits of St. James's Parish. If some Jacobite gentleman or loyal Hanoverian courtier of the year 1714 could revisit to-day the scenes in which he schemed and quarrelled, he would find himself among the familiar names of strangely unfamiliar places. St. James's Park indeed has not altered out of all recognition since the days when Duke Belair and my Lady Betty and my Lady Rattle walked the Mall between the hours of twelve and two, and quoted from Congreve about laughing at the great world and the small. There were avenues of trees then as now. Instead of the ornamental water ran a long canal, populous with ducks, which joined a pond called — no one knows why — Rosamund's Pond. This pond was a favourite trysting-place for happy lovers — “the sylvan deities and rural powers of the place sacred and inviolable to love, often heard lovers' vows repeated by its streams and echôes” — and a convenient water for unhappy lovers to drown themselves in, if we may credit “The Tatler.” St. James's Palace and Marlborough House on its right are scarcely changed ; but to the left only Lord Godolphin's house lay between it and the pleasant park where the deer wandered. Farther off, where Buckingham Palace now is, was Buckingham House. It was then a

stately country mansion on the road to Chelsea, with semi-circular wings and a sweep of iron railings enclosing a spacious court, where a fountain played round a Triton driving his sea-horses. On the roof stood statues of Mercury, Liberty, Secrecy, and Equity, and across the front ran an inscription in great gold letters, "*Sic Siti Lætantur Lares.*" The household gods might well delight in so fair a spot and in the music of that "little wilderness full of black-birds and nightingales," which the bowl-playing Duke who built the house lovingly describes to his friend Shrewsbury.

Most of the streets in St. James's region bear the names they bore when King George first came to London. But it is only in name that they are unchanged. The street of streets, St. James's Street, is metamorphosed indeed since the days when grotesque signs swung overhead, and great gilt carriages lumbered up and down from the park, and the chairs of modish ladies crowded up the narrow thoroughfares. Splendid warriors, fresh from Flanders or the Rhine, clinked their courtly swords against the posts; red-coated country gentlemen jostled their wondering way through the crowd; and the Whig and Tory beaux, with ruffles and rapiers, powder and perfume, haunted the coffee-houses of their factions. Not a house of the old street remains as it was then; not one of the panelled rooms in which minuets were danced by candlelight to the jingle of harpsichord and tinkle of spinet, where wits planned pamphlets and pointed epigrams, where statesmen schemed the overthrow of ministries and even of dynasties, where flushed youth punted away its fortunes or drank away its senses, and staggered out, perhaps, through the little crowd of chairmen and link-boys clustered at the door, to extinguish its foolish flame in a duel at Leicester Fields. All that world is gone; only the name of the street remains, as full in its way of memories and associations as the S.P.Q.R. at the head of a municipal proclamation in modern Rome.

The streets off St. James's Street, too, retain their ancient names, and nothing more—King Street, Ryder Street, York Street, Jermyn Street, the spelling of which seems to have puzzled last century writers greatly, for they wrote

it "Jermyn," "Germain," "Germaine," and even "Germin." St. James's Church, Wren's handiwork, is all that remains from the age of Anne, with "the steeple," says Strype fondly, "lately finished with a fine spire, which adds much splendour to this end of the town, and also serves as a landmark." Perhaps it sometimes served as a landmark to Richard Steele, reeling happily to the home in "Berry" Street, where his beloved Prue awaited him. St. James's Square has gone through many metamorphoses since it was first built in 1665, and called the Piazza. In 1714 there was a rectangular enclosure in the centre, with four passages at the sides through which the public could come and go as they pleased. In a later generation the inhabitants railed the enclosure round, and set in the middle an oval basin of water, large enough to have a boat upon it. In old engravings we see people gravely punting about on the quaint little pond. The fulness of time filled in the pond and set up King William the Third instead in the middle of a grassy circle. It would take too long to enumerate all the changes that our Georgian gentleman would find in the London of his day. Some few, however, are especially worth recording. He would seek in vain for the "Pika-dilly" he knew, with its stately houses and fair gardens. It was almost a country road to the left of St. James's Street, between the Green Park and Hyde Park, with meadows and the distant hills beyond. Going eastward, he would find that a Henrietta Street and a King Street still led into Covent Garden; but the Covent Garden of his time was an open place with a column and a sun-dial in the middle. Handsome dwellings for persons of repute and quality stood on the north side over those arcades which were fondly supposed by Inigo Jones, who laid out the spot, to resemble the Piazza in Venice. Inigo Jones built the church, too, which is to be seen in the "Morning" plate of Hogarth's "Four Times of the Day." This church was destroyed by fire in 1795, and was rebuilt in its present form by Hardwick.

Charing Cross was still a narrow spot where three streets met; what is now Trafalgar Square was covered with houses and the royal mews. St. Martin's Church was not



built by Gibbs for a dozen years later, in 1726. Soho and Seven Dials were fashionable neighbourhoods; ambassadors and peers dwelt in Gerrard Street; Bolingbroke lived in Golden Square. Traces of former splendour still linger about these decayed neighbourhoods; paintings by Sir James Thornhill, Hogarth's master and father-in-law, and elaborate marble mantelpieces, with Corinthian columns and entablatures, still adorn the interiors of some of these houses; bits of quaint Queen Anne architecture and finely-wrought iron railings still lend an air of faded gentility to some of the dingy exteriors. Parts of London that are now fashionable had not then come into existence. Grosvenor Square was only begun in 1716, and it was not until 1725 that the new quarter was sufficiently advanced for its creator, Sir Richard Grosvenor, to summon his intending tenants to a "splendid entertainment," at which the new streets and squares were solemnly named.

Though we of to-day have seen a good deal of what are called Anne and Georgian houses of red brick curiously gabled springing up in all directions, we must not suppose that the London of 1714 was chiefly composed of such cheerful buildings. Wren and Vanbrugh would be indeed surprised if they could see the strange works that are now done, if not in their name, at least in the name of the age for which they built their heavy, plain, solid houses. We can learn easily enough from contemporary engravings what the principal London streets and squares were like when George the Elector became George the King. There are not many remains now of Anne's London, but Queen Anne's Gate, some few houses in Queen Square, Bloomsbury, and here and there a house in the City, preserve the ordinary architecture of the age of Anne. Marlborough House bears witness to what it did in the way of more pretentious buildings.

The insides of these houses were scarcely less like the "Queen Anne revival" of our time than the outsides. The rooms were, as a rule, sparingly furnished. There would be a centre table, some chairs, a settee, a few pictures, a mirror, possibly a spinet or musical instrument of some kind, some shelves perhaps for displaying the Chinese and



Japanese porcelain which every one loved, and, of course, heavy window curtains. Smaller tables were used for the incessant tea-drinking. Large screens kept off the too frequent draughts. Handsomely wrought stoves and andirons stood in the wide fireplaces. The rooms themselves were lofty; the wall of the better kind wainscoted and carved, and the ceilings painted in allegorical designs. Wall papers had only begun to come into use within the last few years of Anne's reign; windows were long and narrow, and small panes were a necessity, as glass makers had not yet attained the art of casting large sheets of glass. The stairs were exceedingly strait; it was mentioned as a recommendation to new houses that two persons could go upstairs abreast. The rents would seem curiously low to Londoners of our time; houses could be got in Pall Mall for two hundred a year, and in good parts of the town for thirty, forty, and fifty pounds a year. Lady Wentworth, in 1705, describes a house in Golden Square, with garden, stables, and coach-house, the rent of which was only three-score pounds a year. Pretty riverside houses let at from five to ten pounds a year. Lodgings would seem cheap now, though they were not held so then, for Swift complains of paying eight shillings a week when he lodged in Bury Street for a dining-room and bedroom on the first floor.

There was no general numbering of houses in 1714; that movement of civilisation did not take place until 1764. Places were known by their signs or their vicinity to a sign. "Blue Boars," "Black Swans," and "Red Lions" were in every street, and people lived at the "Red Bodice," or over against the "Pestle." "The Tatler" tells a story of a young man seeking a house in Barbican for a whole day through a mistake in a sign, whose legend read "This is the Beer," instead of "This is the Bear." Another tried to get into a house at Stocks Market under the impression that he was at his own lodgings at Charing Cross, being misled by the fact that there was a statue of the King on horseback in each place. Signs were usually very large, and jutted so far out from the houses that in narrow streets they frequently touched one another. As it was the fashion to have them carefully painted, carved,

gilded, and supported by branches of wrought iron, they were often very costly, some being estimated as worth more than a hundred guineas.

The ill-paved streets were too often littered with the refuse which careless householders, reckless of fines, flung into the open way. In wet weather the rain roared along the kennel, converting all the accumulated filth of the thoroughfare into loathsome mud. The gutter spouts, which then projected from every house, did not always cast their cataracts clear of the pavement, but sometimes soaked the unlucky passer-by who had not kept close to the wall. Umbrellas were the exclusive privilege of women; men never thought of carrying them. Those whose business or pleasure called them abroad in rainy weather and who did not own carriages might hire one of the eight hundred two-horsed hackney carriages—jolting, uncomfortable machines, with perforated tin sashes instead of window glasses, and grumbling, ever-dissatisfied drivers. There were very few sedan chairs; these were still a comparative novelty for general use, and their bearers are much abused for their drunkenness, clumsiness, and incivility.

The streets were always crowded. Coaches, chairs, wheelbarrows, fops, chimney-sweeps, porters bearing huge burdens, bullies swaggering with great swords, bailiffs chasing some impecunious poet, cutpurses, funerals, christenings, weddings, and street fights would seem from some contemporary accounts to be invariably mixed up together in helpless and apparently inextricable confusion. The general bewilderment was made more bewildering by the very babel of street cries bawled from the sturdy lungs of orange girls, chair menders, broom sellers, ballad singers, old clothes men, and wretched representatives of the various gaols, raising their plaintive appeal to "remember the poor prisoners." The thoroughfares, however, would have been in still worse condition but for the fact that so much of the passenger traffic of the metropolis was done by water and not by land. The wherries on the Thames were as frequent as the gondolas on the canals of Venice. Across the river, down the river, up the river, passengers hurried incessantly in the swift little boats that plied for

hire, and were rowed by one man with a pair of sculls or two men with oars.

Darkness and danger ruled the roads at night with all the horrors of the Rome of Juvenal. Oil lamps flickered freely in some of the better streets, but even these were not lit so long as any suggestion of twilight served for an excuse to delay the illumination. When the moon shone they were not lit at all. Link-boys drove a busy trade in lighting belated wanderers to their homes, and saving them from the perils of places where the pavement was taken up or where open sewers yawned. Precaution was needful, for pitfalls of the kind were not always marked by warning lanterns. Footpads roamed about, and worse than footpads. The fear of the Mohocks had not yet faded from civic memories, and there were still wild young men enough to rush through the streets, wrenching off knockers, insulting quiet people, and defying the watch. Indeed, the watch were as a rule as unwilling to interfere with dangerous revellers as were the billmen of Messina, and seem to have been little better than thieves or Mohocks themselves. They are freely accused of being ever ready to levy blackmail upon those who walked abroad at night by raising ingenious accusations of insobriety, and insisting upon being bought off, or conveying their victim to the round-house.

The Fleet Ditch, which is almost as much of a myth to our generation as the stream of black Cocytus itself, was an unsavoury reality still in the London which George the First entered. It was a tributary of the Thames which, rising somewhere among the gentle hills of Hampstead, sought out the river and found it at Blackfriars. At one time it was used for the conveyance of coals into the city, and colliers of moderate size used to ascend it for a short distance. But towards the end of Anne's reign, and indeed for long before, it had become a mere trickling puddle, discharging its filth and refuse and sewage into the river, and poisoning the air around it.

May Fair was still, and for many years later, celebrated in the now fashionable quarter which bears its name. The fair lasted for six weeks, and left about six months'



demoralisation behind it. "Smock races"—that is to say, races run by young women for a prize of a laced chemise, the competitors sometimes being attired only in their smocks—were still to be seen in Pall Mall and various other places. This popular amusement was kept up in London until 1733, and lingered in country places to a much later time. Bartholomew Fair was scarcely less popular, or less renowned for its speciality of roast sucking pig, than in the days when Ben Jonson's Master Little-Wit, and his wife Win-the-Fight, made acquaintance with its wild humours. There is a coloured print of about this time which gives a sufficiently vivid presentiment of the fair. At Lee and Harper's booth the tragedy of "Judith and Holofernes" is announced by a great glaring painted cloth, while the platform is occupied by a gentleman in Roman armour and a lady in Eastern attire, who are no doubt the principal characters of the play. A gaudy Harlequin and his brother Scaramouch invite the attention of the passers-by. In another booth rope-dancing of men and women is offered to the less tragically minded, and in yet another the world-renowned Faux displays the announcement of his conjuring marvels. A peep-show of the siege of Gibraltar allures the patriotic. Toy-shops, presided over by attractive damsels, lure the light-hearted and the light-fingered too, for many an intelligent pick-pocket seizes the opportunity to rifle the pocket of some too occupied customer. There is a revolving swing, and go-carts are drawn by dogs for the delight of children. Hucksters go about selling gin, aniseed, and fruits, and large booths offer meat, cider, punch, and skittles. The place is thronged with visitors and beggars. A portly figure in a scarlet coat and wearing an order is said to be no less a person than Sir Robert Walpole, who is rumoured to have occasionally honoured the fair with his presence.

Few of the clubs that play so important a part in the history of last century London had come into existence in 1714. The most famous of them either were not yet founded, or lived only as coffee or chocolate houses. There had been literary associations like the "Scriblerus" Club, which was started by Swift, and was finally dissolved



by the quarrels of Oxford and Bolingbroke. The "Saturday" and "Brothers" Clubs had been political societies, at both of which Swift was all-powerful, but they, too, were no more. The "Kit-Kat" Club, of mystic origin and enigmatic name, with all its loyalty to Hanover and all its memories of bright toasts, of Steele, Addison, and Godfrey Kneller, had passed away in 1709, and met no more in Shire Lane, off Fleet Street, or at the "Upper Flask" Inn at Hampstead. It had not lived in vain, according to Walpole, who declared that its patriots had saved the country. Within its rooms the evil-omened Lord Mohun had broken the gilded emblem of the crown off his chair. Jacob Tonson, the bookseller, who was secretary to the club, querulously insisted that the man who would do that would cut a man's throat, and Lord Mohun's fatal career fully justified Tonson's judgment. If the Kit-Kat patriots had saved the country, the Tory patriots of the October Club were no less prepared to do the same. The October Club came first into importance in the latest years of Anne, although it had existed since the last decade of the seventeenth century. The stout Tory squires met together in the "Bell" Tavern, in narrow, dirty King Street, Westminster, to drink October ale, under Dahl's portrait of Queen Anne, and to trouble with their fierce, uncompromising Jacobitism the fluctuating purposes of Harley and the crafty counsels of St. John. The genius of Swift tempered their hot zeal with the cool air of his "advice." Then the wilder spirits seceded, and formed the March Club, which retained all the angry Jacobitism of the parent body, but lost all its importance. There were wilder associations, like the Hell-Fire Club, which, under the presidency of the Duke of Wharton, was distinguished for the desperate attempts it made to justify its name. But it was, like its president, short-lived and soon forgotten. There are fantastic rumours of a Calves' Head Club, organised in mockery of all kings, and especially of the royal martyrs. It was said by obscure pamphleteers to be founded by John Milton; but whether the body ever had any real existence seems now to be uncertain.

Next to the clubs came the "mug houses." The mug houses were political associations of a humbler order, where men met together to drink beer and denounce the Whigs or Tories, according to their convictions. But at this time the coffee-houses occupied the most important position in social life. There were a great many of them, each with some special association which still keeps it in men's memories. At Garraway's, in Change Alley, tea was first retailed at the high prices which then made tea a luxury. The "Rainbow," in Fleet Street, the second coffee-house opened in London, is mentioned in "The Spectator"; the first was Bowman's, in St. Michael's Alley, Cornhill. Lloyd's, in Lombard Street, was dear to Steele and Addison. At Don Saltero's, by the river at Chelsea, Mr. Salter exhibited his collection of curiosities and delighted himself, and no one else, by playing the fiddle. At the "Smyrna," Prior and Swift were wont to receive their acquaintances. From the "St. James's," the last house but one on the south-west corner of St. James's Street, "The Tatler" dated its foreign and domestic news, and conferred fame on its waiter Mr. Kidney, "who has long conversed with and filled tea for the most consummate politicians." It was the headquarters of Whigs and officers of the Guards; letters from Stella were left here for Swift, and here in later years originated Goldsmith's "Retaliation." Will's, at the north corner of Russell Street and Bow Street, famous for its memories of Dryden and for "The Tatler's" dramatic criticisms, had ceased to exist in 1714. Its place was taken by Button's, at the other side of Russell Street, started by Addison in 1712. Here, later, was the lion-head letter-box for "The Guardian," designed by Hogarth. At Child's, in St. Paul's Churchyard, "The Spectator" often smoked a pipe. Sir Roger de Coverley was beloved at Squire's, near Gray's Inn Gate. Slaughter's, in St. Martin's Lane, was often honoured by the presence, first of Dryden, and then of Pope. Serle's, near Lincoln's Inn, was cherished by the law. At the "Grecian," in Devereux Court, Strand, learned men met and quarrelled; a fatal duel was once fought in consequence of an argument there over the

accent on a Greek word. At the "Grecian," too, Steele amused himself by putting the action of Homer's "Iliad" into an exact journal and planning his "Temple of Fame." From White's chocolate house, which afterwards became the famous club, came Mr. Isaac Bickerstaff's "Accounts of Gallantry, Pleasure, and Entertainment." The "Cocoa Tree" was the Tory coffee-house in St. James's Street. Ozinda's chocolate house, next to St. James's Palace, was also a Tory resort, and its owner was arrested in 1715 for supposed complicity in Jacobite conspiracy.

To these coffee and chocolate houses came all the wit and all the fashion of London. Men of letters and statesmen, men of the robe and men of the sword, lawyers, dandies, poets, and philosophers, met there to discuss politics, literature, scandal, and the play. There were often very strange figures among the motley crowd behind the red-curtained windows of a St. James's coffee-house. The gentleman who made himself so agreeable to the barmaid, or who chatted so affably about the conduct of the allies or the latest news from Sweden, might meet you again later on if your road lay at all outside town, and imperiously request you to stand and deliver. But of all the varied assembly the strangest figures must have been the beaux and exquisites, in all their various degrees of "dappers," "fops," "smart fellows," "pretty fellows," and "very pretty fellows." They made a brave show in many-coloured splendour of attire, heavily scented with orange-flower water, civet, violet, or musk, with large falbala periwigs, or long powdered duvilliers, with snuff-boxes and perspective glasses perpetually in their hands, and dragon or right Jamree canes, curiously clouded and amber-headed, dangling by a blue riband from the wrist or the coat button. The staff was as essential to an early Georgian gentleman as to an Athenian of the age of Pericles, and the cane-carrying custom incurred the frequent attacks of the satirists. Cane-bearers are made to declare that the knocking of the cane upon the shoe, leaning one leg upon it, or whistling with it in the mouth, were such reliefs to them in conversation that they did not know how to be good company without it. Some of these



young men appear to have affected effeminacy, like an Agathon or a Henri Trois. Steele has put it on record that he heard some who set up to be pretty fellows calling to one another at White's or the St. James's by the names of "Betty," "Nelly," and so forth.

Servants play almost as important parts as their masters in the humours of the time. Rich people were always surrounded by a throng of servants. First came the valet de chambre, who was expected to know a little of everything, from shaving and wig-making to skill in country sports, and had as much experience in all town matters as a servant out of Terence or Molière. Last came the negro slave, who waited on my lord or my lady, with the silver collar of servitude about his neck.

Servants wore fine clothes and aped fine manners. The footmen of the Lords and Commons held mimic Parliament while waiting for their masters at Westminster, parodying with elaborate care the proceedings of both Houses. They imitated their masters in other ways, too, taking their titles after the fashion made famous by Gil Blas and his fellow valets, and familiar by the farce of "High Life below Stairs." The writer of "The Patriot" of Thursday, August 19, 1714, satirises misplaced ambition by "A discourse which I overheard not many evenings ago as I went with a friend of mine into Hyde Park. We found, as usual, a great number of gentlemen's servants at the park gate, and my friend, being unacquainted with the saucy custom of those fellows to usurp their masters' titles, was very much surprised to hear a lusty rogue tell one of his companions who inquired after his fellow-servant that his Grace had his head broke by the cook-maid for making a sop in the pan." Presently after another assured the company of the illness of my lord bishop. "The information had doubtless continued had not a fellow in a blue livery alarmed the rest with the news that Sir Edward and the marquis were at fisticuffs about a game at chuck, and that the brigadier had challenged the major-general to a bout at cudgels."

It is only fair, after enumerating so many of the eccentricities and discomforts of early Georgian London, to



mention one proof of civilisation of which Londoners were then able to boast. London had a penny post, of which it was not unreasonably proud. This penny post is thus described in Strype's edition of Stow's "Survey of London." "For a further convenience to the inhabitants of this city and parts adjacent for about ten miles compass, another post, and that a foot post, commonly called the penny post, was erected, and though at first set up by a private hand, yet, being of such considerable amount, is since taken into the post-office and made a branch of it. And in this all letters and parcels not exceeding a pound weight, and also any sum of money not above £10 or parcel of £10 value is safely conveyed, and at the charge of a penny, to all parts of the city and suburbs, and but a penny more at the delivery to most towns within ten miles of London, and to some towns at a farther distance. And for the better management of this office there are in London and Westminster six general post-offices . . . at all which there constantly attend . . . officers to receive letters and parcels from the several places appointed to take them in, there being a place or receiving house for the receipt thereof in most streets, with a table hung at the door or shop window, in which is printed in great letters 'Penny Post Letters and Parcels are taken in Here.' And at those houses they have letter carriers to call every hour. . . . All the day long they are employed, some in going their walks to bring in, and others to carry out."

The next town in population to London was Bristol, and Bristol had then only one-seventeenth of London's population. The growth of the manufacturing industry, which has created such a cluster of great towns in the North of England, had hardly begun to show itself when George the First came to the throne. Bristol was not only the most populous place after London at this time, but it was the great English seaport. It had held this rank for centuries. Even at the time when "Tom Jones" was written, many years after the accession of George the First, the Bristol Alderman filled the same place in popular imagination that is now assigned to the Alderman of London. Fielding attributes to the Bristol Alderman that fine appreciation

of the qualities of turtle soup with which more modern humorists have endowed his metropolitan fellow.

Liverpool was hardly thought of in the early Georgian days. It was only made into a separate parish a few years before George came to the throne, and its first dock was opened in 1709. Manchester was comparatively obscure and unimportant, and had not yet made its first export of cotton goods. At this time Norwich, famous for its worsted and woollen works and its fuller's earth, surpassed it in business importance. By the middle of the century the population of Bristol is said to have exceeded ninety thousand; Norwich to have had more than fifty-six thousand; Manchester about forty-five thousand; Newcastle forty thousand; and Birmingham about thirty thousand, while Liverpool had swelled to about thirty thousand, and ranked as the third port in the country. York was the chief city of the Northern counties; Exeter the capital of the West. Shrewsbury was of some account in the region towards the Welsh frontier. Worcester, Derby, Nottingham, and Canterbury were places of note. Bath had not come into its fashion and its fame as yet. Its first pump-room had been built only a few years before George entered England. The strength of England now, if we leave London out of consideration, lies in the north, and goes no further southward than a line which would include Birmingham. In the early days of the Georges this was just the part of England which was of least importance, whether as regards manufacturing energy or political power.

Ireland just then was quiet. It had sunk into a quietude something like that of the grave. Civil war had swept over the country; a succession of civil wars indeed had plagued it. There was a time just before the outbreak of the parliamentary struggle against Charles the First when, according to Clarendon, Ireland was becoming a highly prosperous country, growing vigorously in trade, manufacture, letters, and arts, and beginning to be, as he puts it, "a jewel of great lustre in the royal diadem." But civil war and religious persecution had blighted this rising prosperity, and for the evils coming from political proscription and religious persecution the statesmen of the time

could think of no remedy but new proscription and fresh persecution. Roman Catholics were excluded from the legislature, from municipal corporations, and from the liberal professions; they were not allowed to teach or be taught by Catholics; they were not permitted to keep arms; the trade and navigation of Ireland were put under ruinous restrictions and disabilities. In the reign of Anne new Acts had been passed by the Irish Parliament, and sanctioned by the Crown "to prevent the further growth of Popery." Some of these later measures introduced not a few of the very harshest conditions of the penal code against Catholics. The Irish Parliament at that time was merely in fact what has since been called the British garrison; it consisted of the conquerors and the settlers. The Irish people had no more to do with it, except in the way of suffering under it, than the slaves in Georgia before the Civil War had to do with the Congress at Washington.

Dublin has perhaps changed less than London since 1714, but it has changed greatly notwithstanding. The Irish Parliament was already established in College Green, but not in the familiar building which it afterwards occupied. It met in Chichester House, which had been built as a hospital by Sir George Carew at the close of the sixteenth century. From him it passed into the possession of Sir Arthur Chichester, an English soldier of fortune, who had distinguished himself in France under Henry the Fourth, and who afterwards came to Ireland and played an active part in the plantation of Ulster. It was not until 1728 that Chichester House was pulled down, and the new building erected upon its site. Trinity College of course stood on College Green; so did two other stately dwellings, Charlemont House and Clancarty House, both of which have long since passed away. There were several book-shops on the Green as well, and a great many taverns and coffee-shops. The statue of King William the Third had been set up in 1701. The collegians professed great indignation at the manner in which the statue turned its back to the college gates, and the effigy was the object of many indignities, for which the students sometimes got into grave trouble with the authorities.



St. Patrick's Well was one of the great features of Dublin in the early part of the last century. It stood in the narrow way by Trinity College, the name of which had not long been altered from Patrick's Well Lane to Nassau Street. The change had been made in compliment to a bust of William the Third, which adorned the front of one of the houses, but for long after the place was much more associated with the well than with the House of Orange. The waters of the well were popularly supposed to have wonderful curative and health-giving properties, and it was much used. It dried up suddenly in 1729, and gave Swift the opportunity of writing some fiercely indignant national verses. But the water was restored to it in 1731, and it still exists in peaceful, half-forgotten obscurity in the College grounds.

Dawson Street, off Nassau Street, had only newly come into existence. It was called after Joshua Dawson, who had just built for himself a handsome mansion with gardens round it. He sold the house in 1715 to the Dublin Corporation to be used as a Mansion House for their Lord Mayors. Where Molesworth and Kildare Streets now stand there was at this time a great piece of waste land called Molesworth Fields. Chapelizod, now a sufficiently populous suburb, was then the little village of Chappell Isoud, said to be so called from that Belle Isoud, daughter of King Anguish of Ireland, who was beloved by Tristram. The General Post-Office in Sycamore Alley had for Postmaster-General Isaac Manley, who was a friend of Swift's. Manley incurred the Dean's resentment in 1718 by opening letters addressed to him. The postal arrangements were, as may be imagined, miserably defective. Owing to the carelessness of postmasters, the idleness of post boys, bad horses, and sometimes the want of horses, much time was lost and letters constantly miscarried.

The amusements of Dublin were those of London on a small scale. Dublin was as fond of its coffee-houses as London itself. Lucas's, in Cork Street, was the favourite resort of beaux, gamesters, and bullies. Here Talbot Edgeworth, Miss Edgeworth's ancestor, whom Swift called the "prince of puppies," displayed his follies, his fine



dresses, and his handsome face, and believed himself to be the terror of men and the adoration of women, till he died mad in the Dublin Bridewell. The yard behind Lucas's was the theatre of numerous duels, which were generally witnessed from the windows by all the company who happened to be present. These took care that the laws of honourable combat were observed. Close at hand was the "Swan" Tavern, in Swan Alley, a district devoted chiefly to gambling-houses. On Cork Hill was the cock-pit royal, where gentlemen and ruffians mingled together to witness and wager on the sport. Cork Hill was not a pleasant place at night. Pedestrians were often insulted and roughly treated by the chairmen hanging about Lucas's and the "Eagle" Tavern. Even the waiters of these establishments sometimes amused themselves by pouring pailfuls of foul water upon the aggrieved passer-by. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that an Irish edition of the Hell Fire Club was set up at the "Eagle" in 1735. The roughness of the time found its way into the theatre in Smock Lane, which was the scene of frequent political riots. Dublin had its Pasquin or Marforio in an oaken image, known as the "Wooden Man," which had stood on the southern side of Essex Street, not far from Eustace Street, since the end of the seventeenth century.

Cork, Limerick, Waterford, and Belfast were the only considerable towns in Ireland after the Irish capital. Not many years had passed since Cork was besieged by Marlborough himself, and taken from King James. The Duke of Grafton, one of the sons of Charles the Second, was killed then in a little street or lane, which still commemorates the fact by its name. The same year that saw Marlborough besieging Cork saw Limerick invested by the forces of King William under William's own command. The Irish general, Sarsfield, held out so gallantly that William had to give up the attempt, and it was not until the following year, and after the cause of James had gone down everywhere else, that Sarsfield consented to accept the terms, most honourable to him, of the famous Treaty of Limerick. There was but little feeling in Ireland in favour of the Chevalier at the time of Queen Anne's death. Any

sympathy with the Stuart cause that still lingered was sentimental merely, and even as such hardly existed among the great mass of the people. To these, indeed, the change of masters could matter but little; they had had enough of the Stuarts, and the conduct of James the Second during his Irish campaign had made his name and his memory despised. Rightly or wrongly, he was charged with cowardice—he who in his early days had heard his bravery in action praised by the great Turenne; and the charge was fatal to him in the minds of the Irish people. The penal laws of Anne's days were not excused because of any strong Jacobite sympathies or active Jacobite schemes in Ireland.

The Union between England and Scotland was only seven years old when George came to the throne of these kingdoms, and already an attempt had been made by a powerful party in Scotland to obtain its repeal. The Union was unquestionably accomplished by Lord Somers and other English statesmen with the object of securing the succession much rather than the national interests of the Scottish people. It was for a long time detested in Scotland. The manner of its accomplishment, mainly by bribery and threats, made it more odious. Yet it was based on principles which secured the dearest interests of Scotland, and respected the religious opinions of the population. Scottish law, Scottish systems, and the Scotch Church were left without interference, and constitutional security was given for the maintenance of the Presbyterian Establishment. In plain words, the Union admitted and maintained the rights and the claims of the great majority of the Scotch people, and, therefore, when the first heat of dislike to it had gone out, Scotland began to find that she could be old Scotland still, even when combined in one constitutional system with England. She soon accepted cordially the conditions which opened new ways to her industrial and trading energy, and did not practically interfere with her true national independence.

Edinburgh was then, and remained for generations to come, much the same as it appeared when Mary Stuart first visited it. Historians like Brantôme and poets like

Ronsard lamented for their fair princess exiled in a savage land. But the daughter of the House of Lorraine might well have been content with the curious beauty of her new capital. Even now, more than three centuries since Mary Stuart landed in Scotland, and more than a century and a half since her descendant raised the standard of rebellion against the Elector of Hanover, Edinburgh Old Town retains more of its antique characteristics than either of the capitals of the sister kingdoms. It is true that the Northern Athens has followed the example of its Greek original in shifting the scene of its social life. The Attic Athens of to-day occupies a different site from that of the city of Pericles. New Edinburgh has reared itself on the other bank of that chasm where once the North Loch was, and where now the trains run. Edinburgh, however, more fortunate than the city of Cecrops, while founding a new town has not lost the old. But at the time of the Hanoverian accession, and for generations later, not a house of the New Town had been built. Edinburgh was still a walled city, with many gates or "ports," occupying the same ground that she had covered in the reign of James the Third, along the ridge between the grey Castle on the height at the west and haunted Holyrood in the plain at the east. All along this ridge rose the huge buildings, "lands," as they were called, stretching from peak to peak like a mountain range—five, six, sometimes ten storeys high—pierced with innumerable windows, crowned with jagged, fantastic roofs and gables, and as crowded with life as the "Insulæ" of Imperial Rome. Over all rose the graceful pinnacle of St. Giles's Church, around whose base the booths of goldsmiths and other craftsmen clustered. The great main street of this Old Town was, and is, the Canongate, with its hundred or so of narrow closes or wynds running off from it at right angles. The houses in these closes were as tall as the rest, though the space across the street was often not more than four or five feet wide. The Canongate was Edinburgh in the early days of the last century far more than St. James's Street was London. Its high houses, with their wooden panellings, with the old armorial devices on their doors, and their common stair



climbing from storey to storey outside, have seen the whole panorama of Scottish history pass by.

Life cannot have been very comfortable in Edinburgh. There were no open spaces or squares in the royalty, with the exception of the Parliament Close. The houses were so well and strongly built that the city was seldom troubled by fire, but they were poor inside, with low, dark rooms. We find, in consequence, that houses inhabited by the gentry in the early part of the eighteenth century were considered almost too bad for very humble folk at its close, and the success of the New Town was assured from the day when its first foundation stone was laid. But if not very comfortable, life was quiet and simple. People generally dined at one or two o'clock in Edinburgh when George the First was King. Shopkeepers closed their shops when they dined and opened them again for business when the meal was over. There was very little luxury; wine was seldom seen on the tables of the middle classes, and few people kept carriages. There were not many amusements; friends met at each other's houses to take tea at five o'clock, and perhaps to listen to a little music; for the Edinburghers were fond of music, and an annual concert which was established early in the century lingered on till within three years of its close. But this simplicity was not immortal, and we hear sad complaints as the century grows old concerning the decadence of manners made manifest in the luxurious practice of dining as late as four or five, the freer use of wine, and other signs of over-civilisation.

Glasgow, in the Clyde valley, ranked next to Edinburgh in importance among Scotch towns. More than twenty years later than the time of which we treat, the author of a pamphlet called "Memoirs of the Times" could write, "Glasgow is become the third trading city in the island." But in 1714 the future of its commercial prosperity, founded upon its trade with the West Indies and the American colonies, had scarcely dawned. The Scotch merchants had not yet been able, from want of capital, and, it was said, the jealousy of English merchants, to make much use of the privileges conferred upon them by the Union, and Glasgow was on the wrong side of the island for sharing

in Scotland's slight Continental trade. Still, Glasgow was fairly thriving, thanks to the inland navigation of the Clyde. Some of its streets were broad ; many of its houses substantial, and even stately. Its pride was the great minster of St. Mungo's, "a solid, weel-jointed mason-wark, that will stand as lang as the warld keep hands and gunpowther aff it," to quote the enthusiastic words of Andrew Fair-service. The streets were often thronged with the wild Highlanders from the hills, who came down, as heavily and as variously armed as a modern Albanian chieftain, to trade in small cattle and shaggy ponies.

At this time the average Englishman knew little about the Lowlands, and nothing about the Highlands of Scotland. The Londoner of the age of Anne would have looked upon any traveller who had made his way through the Highlands of Scotland with much the same curiosity as his descendants a generation or two later regarded Bruce when he returned from Abyssinia, and would probably have received most of his statements with a politer but not less profound disbelief. It was cited as a proof of the immense popularity of "The Spectator," that despite all the difficulties of intercommunication it found its way into Scotland. George the First had passed away, and George the Second was reigning in his stead, before any Englishman was found foolhardy enough to explore the Scottish Highlands, and lucky enough to escape unhurt, and publish an account of his experiences, and put on record his disgust at the monstrous deformity of the Highland scenery. But the Londoner in 1714 was scarcely better informed about the Scotch Lowlands. What he could learn was not of a nature to impress him very profoundly. Scotland then, and for some time to come, was very far behind England in many things ; most of all, in everything connected with agriculture. In the villages, the people dwelt in rude but fairly comfortable cottages, made chiefly of straw-mixed clay, and straw-thatched. Wearing clothes that were usually home-spun, home-woven, and home-tailored ; living principally, if not entirely, on the produce of his own farm, the Lowland farmer passed a life of curious independence and isolation. To plough his land, with its strange measure-

ments of "oxgate," "ploughgate," and "davoch," he had clumsy wooden ploughs, the very shape of which is now almost a tradition, but which were certainly at least as primitive in construction as the plough Ulysses guided in his farm at Ithaca. Wheeled vehicles of any kind, carts or wheelbarrows, were rarities. A parish possessed of a couple of carts was considered well provided for. Even where carts were known, they were of little use, they were so wretchedly constructed, and the few roads that did exist were totally unfit for wheeled traffic. Roads were as rare in Scotland then as they are to-day in Peloponnesus. An enterprising Aberdeenshire gentleman, Sir Archibald Grant of Monymusk, is deservedly distinguished for the interest he took in road-making about the time of the Hanoverian accession. Some years later, statute labour did a little—a very little—towards improving the public roads; but it was not until after the rebellion of 1745, when the Government took the matter in hand, that anything really efficient was done. A number of good roads were then made, chiefly by military labour, and received in popular language the special title of the King's highways. But in the early part of the century there was little use for carts, even of the clumsiest kind. Such carriage as was necessary was accomplished by strings of horses tethered in Indian file, like the lines of camels in the East, and laden with sacks or baskets. The cultivation of the soil was poor; "the surface was generally unenclosed; oats and barley the chief grain products; wheat little cultivated; little hay made for winter; the horses then feeding chiefly on straw and oats." "The arable land ran in narrow slips," with "stony wastes between, like the moraines of a glacier." The hay meadow was an undrained marsh, where rank grasses mingled with rushes and other aquatic plants yielded a coarse fodder. About the time when George the First became King of England, Lord Haddington introduced the sowing of clover and other grass seeds. Some ten years earlier, an Englishwoman, Elizabeth Mordaunt, daughter of the Earl of Peterborough, and wife of the Duke of Gordon, introduced into her husband's estates English ploughs, English ploughmen, the system of fallowing up to that time



unknown in Scotland, planted moors, sowed foreign grasses, and showed the Morayshire farmers how to make hay.

As a natural result of the primitive and incomplete agriculture, dearth of food was frequent, and even severe famine, in all its horrors of starvation and death, not uncommon. When George the First came to the throne the century was not old enough for the living generation of Scotchmen to forget the ghastly seven years that had brought the seventeenth century to its close — seven withered ears blasted with east-wind. So many died of hunger, that in the grim words of one who lived through that time, “the living were wearied with the burying of the dead.” The plague of hunger took away all natural and relative affections, “so that husbands had not sympathy for their wives, nor wives for their husbands, parents for their children, nor children for their parents.” The saddest proof of the extent of the suffering is shown in the irreligious despair which seized upon the sufferers. Scotland then, as now, was strongly marked for its piety, but want made men defiant of heaven, prepared, like her who counselled the man of Uz, to curse God and die by the roadside. Warned by no dream of thin and ill-favoured kine, the Pharaohs of Westminster had passed an Act, enforced while the famine was well begun, against the importation of meal into Scotland. At the sorest of the famine, the importation of meal from Ireland was permitted, and exportation of grain from Scotland prohibited. But, in the beginning of the eighteenth century, when the famine had but just subsided, a Government commission ordered that all loads of grain brought from Ireland into the West of Scotland should be staved and sunk.

The empire over which King George came to rule was as yet in a growing, almost a fluid condition. In North America England had, by one form of settlement or another, New York, but lately captured; New Jersey, the New England States, such as they then were, Virginia (an old possession), Maryland, South Carolina, Pennsylvania (settled by William Penn), whose death was now very near. Louisiana had just been taken possession of by the French. The city of New Orleans was not yet built. The French

held the greater part of what was then known of Canada ; Jamaica, Barbadoes, and other West Indian islands were in England's ownership. The great East Indian Empire was only in its very earliest germ ; its full development was not yet foreseen by statesman, thinker, or dreamer. The English flag had only begun to float from the Rock of Gibraltar.

## CHAPTER VI

### OXFORD'S FALL ; BOLINGBROKE'S FLIGHT

KING GEORGE did not make the slightest concealment of his intentions with regard to the political complexion of his future government. He did not attempt or pretend to conciliate the Tories, and, on the other hand, he was determined not to be a puppet in the hands of a "Junto" of illustrious Whigs. He therefore formed a Cabinet, composed exclusively, or almost exclusively, of pure Whigs ; but he composed it of Whigs who at that time were only rising men in the political world. He was going to govern on Whig principles, but he was not going to be himself governed by another "Junto" of senior Whig statesmen, like that which had been so powerful in the reign of William the Third. He acted with that shrewd, hard common sense which was an attribute of his family, and which often served instead of genius or enlightenment or intelligence, or even experience. A man of infinitely higher capacity than George might have found himself puzzled as to his proper policy under conditions entirely new and unfamiliar ; but George acted as if the conditions were familiar to him, and set about governing England as he would have set about managing his household in Hanover ; and he somehow hit upon the course which under all the circumstances was the best he could have followed. It is not easy to see how he could have acted otherwise with safety to himself. It would have been idle to try to conciliate the Tories. The more active spirits among the Tories were, in

point of fact, conspirators on behalf of the Stuart cause. The colourless Tories were not men whose influence or force of character would have been of much use to the King in endeavouring to bring about a reconciliation between the two great parties in the State. The civil war was not over, or nearly over, yet, and there were still to come some moments of crisis, when it seemed doubtful whether, after all, the cause supposed to be fallen might not successfully lift its head again. As the words of Scott's spirited ballad put it, before the Stuart crown was to go down, "there are heads to be broke." For George the First to attempt to form a coalition Cabinet of Whigs and Tories at such a time would have been about as wild a scheme as for M. Thiers to have formed a coalition Cabinet of Republicans and of Bonapartists, while Napoleon the third was yet living at Chislehurst.

The Tories had been much discredited in the eyes of the country by the Peace of Utrecht. The long war of the Succession had been allowed to end without securing to England and to Europe the one purpose with which it was undertaken by the allies. It was a war to decide whether a French prince, a grandson of Louis the Fourteenth, and whose accession seemed to threaten a future union of Spain with France, should or should not be allowed to ascend the throne of Spain. The end of the war left the French Prince on the throne of Spain. Yet even this fact would not in itself have been very distressing or alarming to the English people, however it might have pained others of the allied states. The English people probably would never have drawn a sword against France in this quarrel if it had not been for the rash act of Louis the Fourteenth in recognising the Chevalier, James Stuart, as King of England on the death of his father, James the Second. But England felt bitterly that the Peace of Utrecht left France and Louis not only unpunished, but actually rewarded. All the campaigns, the victories, the sacrifices, the genius of Marlborough, the heroism of his soldiers, had ended in nothing. Peace was secured at any price. It was not that the people of England did not want to have a peace made at the time. On the contrary, most Englishmen were thoroughly tired of the war, and felt but little interest in the main objects for



which it had been originally undertaken. Most Englishmen would have agreed to the very terms which were contained in the treaty, disadvantageous as these conditions were in many points. But they were ashamed of the manner in which the treaty had been brought about, more than of the treaty itself. France lost little or nothing by the arrangement: she sacrificed no territory, and was left with practically the same frontier which she had secured for herself twenty years before. Spain had to give up her possessions in Italy and the Low Countries. The Dutch got very little to make up to them for their troubles and losses, but they could do nothing for themselves, and the English statesmen were determined not to continue the war. Yet, on the whole, these terms were not altogether unsatisfactory to the people of England. The war was becoming an insufferable burden. The National Debt was swollen to a size which alarmed at that time and almost horrified many persons, and there seemed no chance whatever of the expulsion of Philip, the French prince, from Spain. All these considerations had much influence over the public mind, and possibly would of themselves have entirely borne down the arguments of those who contended that an opportunity was now come to England of bringing France, so long her principal enemy and greatest danger, completely to her feet. Marlborough's victories had, indeed, made it easy to march to Paris and dictate there such terms of peace as would keep France powerless for generations to come. But the English people were disgusted by the manner in which the Treaty of Utrecht had been brought about. In order to secure that arrangement it was absolutely necessary to destroy the authority of Marlborough, and the Tory statesmen set about this work with the most shameless and undisguised pertinacity. Through the influence of Mrs. Masham, a cousin of the Duchess of Marlborough, introduced by the Duchess herself to the Queen, the Tory statesmen contrived to get the Whig ministry dismissed, and a ministry formed under Harley and Bolingbroke. These statesmen opened secret negotiations with France. They were determined to bring about a peace by any sort of arrangement. They betrayed England's allies by

entering into secret negotiations with the enemy, in express violation of the conditions of the alliance ; they sacrificed the Catalonian populations of Northern Spain in the most shameless manner. The Catalans had been encouraged to rise against the French prince, and England had promised in return to protect them, and to secure them the restoration of all their ancient liberties. In making the peace the Catalans were wholly forgotten. The best excuse that can be made for the Tory Ministers is to suppose that they positively and actually did forget all about the Catalans. Anyhow, the Catalans were left at the mercy of the new King of Spain, and were treated after the severest fashion of the time in dealing with conquered but obstinate rebels.

In order to make such a peace it was necessary to remove Marlborough. Some accusations were pressed against him to secure his removal. He was charged with having taken perquisites from the contractors who were supplying the army with bread, and with having deducted  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. from the pay which England allowed to the foreign troops in her service. Marlborough's defence would not have been considered satisfactory in our day ; and, indeed, it is impossible to think of any such accusation being made, or any such defence being needed, in times like ours. Imagination can hardly conceive the possibility of such charges being seriously made against the Duke of Wellington, for example, or the Duke of Wellington condescending to plead custom and usage in reply to them. But in Marlborough's day things were very different, and Marlborough was able to show that, as regarded some of the accusations, he had only done what was customary among men in his position, and what he had full authority for doing ; and, as regarded others, that he had applied the sums he got to the business of the State as secret service money, and had not made any personal profit. He did not produce any accounts ; but, assuming his defence to be well founded, it is quite possible that the keeping of accounts might have been an undesirable and inconvenient practice. At all events it was certain that Marlborough had not done any worse than other statesmen of the time in civil as well as in military service had been in the habit of doing ; and, considering all the

conditions of the period, the defence which he set up ought to have been satisfactory to every one. It probably would have satisfied his enemies but that they were determined to get rid of him. They were, indeed, compelled to get rid of him in order to make their secret treaty with France, and they succeeded. Marlborough was dismissed from all his employments, and went for a time into exile. The English people, therefore, saw that peace had been made by the sacrifice of the greatest English commander who, up to that time, had ever taken the field in their service. The treaty had been obtained by the most shameless intrigues to bring about the downfall of this great soldier. No matter how desirable in itself the peace might be, no matter how reasonable the conditions on which it was based, yet it became a national disgrace when secured by means like these. Nor was this all: the Tory statesmen, finding it imperative for their purpose to have a majority in the House of Lords, as well as in the House of Commons, prevailed upon the Queen to stretch her royal prerogative to the extent of making twelve peers. All these new peers were Tories; one of them was Mr. Masham, husband of the woman who had assisted so efficiently in the degradation of the Duke of Marlborough. When they first appeared in the House of Lords a Whig statesman ironically asked them whether they proposed to vote separately or by their foreman.

Never, perhaps, has a mean and treacherous policy like that which brought about the Treaty of Utrecht had so splendid a literary defence set up for it. Swift, with the guidance of Bolingbroke, and put up to the work by Bolingbroke, devoted the best of his powers to defame Marlborough, and to justify the conduct of the Tory Ministry. No matter how clear one's own opinions on the question may be, it is impossible, even at this distance of time, to study the writings of Swift on this subject without finding our convictions sometimes shaken. The biting satire, which seems only like cool common sense and justice taking their keenest tone; the masterly array, or perhaps we should rather say disarray, of facts, dates, and arguments; the bold assumptions which, by their very ease



and confidence, bear down the reader's knowledge and judgment; the clear, unadorned style, made for convincing and conquering—all these qualities, and others too, unite with almost matchless force to make the worse seem the better cause. It is true that the mind of the reader is never impressed by Swift's vindication of the Tories, as it is always impressed by Burke's denunciation of the French Revolution. Swift does not make one see, as Burke does, that the whole soul and conscience of the author are in his work. Swift is evidently the advocate retained to conduct the case; Burke is the man of impassioned conviction, speaking out because he cannot keep silent. Still, we have all of us been sometimes made to question our own judgment, and almost to repudiate our own previously formed impressions as to facts, by the skill of some great advocate in a court of law; and it is skill of this kind, and of the very highest order, that we have to recognise in Swift's efforts to justify the policy of the Treaty of Utrecht. To make out any case it was necessary to endeavour to lower Marlborough in the estimation of the English people, just as it was necessary to destroy his power in order to get the ground open for the arrangement of the treaty. Swift set himself to this task with a malignity equal to his genius. Arbuthnot, hardly inferior as a satirist to Swift, wrote a "History of John Bull," to hold up Marlborough and Marlborough's wife to ridicule and to hatred. He depicted the great soldier as a low and roguish attorney, who was deluding his clients into the carrying on of a long and costly lawsuit, for the mere sake of putting money into his own pocket. He lampooned England's allies as well as England's great general: he described the Dutch, whom the Tory Ministers had shamefully betrayed, as self-seeking and perfidious traitors, for whose protection we were sacrificing all, until we found out that they were secretly juggling with our enemies for our destruction. No stronger argument could be found to condemn the conduct of the Tory Ministers than the mere fact that Swift and Arbuthnot failed to secure their acquittal at the bar of public opinion. All the attacks on Marlborough were inspired by Bolingbroke, and it has only to be added

that Marlborough had been Bolingbroke's first and best benefactor.

The King appointed Lord Townshend his Secretary of State. The office was then regarded as that of First Lord of the Treasury is now: it carried with it the authority of Prime Minister. James Stanhope was Second Secretary. Walpole was at first put in the subordinate office of Paymaster-General, without a seat in the Cabinet: a place in administration which at a later period was assigned to no less a man than Edmund Burke. Walpole's political capacity soon, however, made it evident that he was fitted for higher office, and we shall find that he does not remain long at the post of Paymaster-General. The Duke of Shrewsbury had resigned both his offices: that of Lord Treasurer, and that of Viceroy of Ireland. Lord Sunderland accepted the Irish Viceroyalty, and the Lord Treasurership was put into commission and from that time was heard of no more. Next to Walpole himself, the most notable man in the Administration—the man, that is to say, who became best known to the world afterwards—was Pulteney, now Walpole's devoted friend, before long to be his bitter and unrelenting enemy. Pulteney, just now, is still a very young man, only in his thirty-third year; but he is the hereditary representative of good Whig principles, and has already distinguished himself in the House of Commons as a skilful and fearless advocate of his political faith; he is a keen and clever pamphleteer; in later days, if he had lived then, he would doubtless have been a writer of leading articles in newspapers. His style is polished and penetrating, like that of an epigrammatist. He has travelled much for that time, and is what was then called an elegant scholar. The eloquent and silver-tongued Lord Cowper was restored to the office of Lord Chancellor, which he had already held under Queen Anne, and by virtue of which he had presided at the impeachment of Sacheverell. When Cowper was made Lord Keeper of the Great Seal by Anne in 1705, he was in the forty-first year of his age, but looked very much younger. He wore his own hair at that time, an unusual thing in Anne's days, and this added to his juvenile appearance. The Queen insisted that he must have his

hair cut off and must wear a heavy wig ; otherwise, she said, the world would think she had given the seals to a boy. Cowper was a prudent, cautious, clever man, whose abilities made a considerable impression upon his own time, but have carried his memory only in a faint and feeble way on to ours. He was a fine speaker, so far as style and manner went, and he had a charming voice. Chesterfield said of him that the ears and the eyes gave him up the hearts and understandings of the audience. The Duke of Argyll became Commander-in-Chief for Scotland. In Ireland, Sir Constantine Phipps was removed from the office of Chancellor, on the ground of his Jacobite opinions ; and it is a curious fact, worth noting as a sign of the times, that the University of Oxford unanimously agreed to confer on him an honorary degree almost immediately after—on the day, in fact, of the King's coronation.

Lord Townshend, the Prime Minister, as we may call him, was not a man of any conspicuous ability. He belonged to that class of competent, capable, trustworthy Englishmen who discharge satisfactorily the duties of any office to which they are called in the ordinary course of their lives. Such a man as Townshend would have made a respectable Lord Mayor, or a satisfactory Chairman of Quarter Sessions, if fortune had appointed him to no higher functions. He might have changed places probably with an average Lord Mayor or Chairman of Quarter Sessions without any particular effect being wrought on English history. Men of this stamp have nothing but official rank in common with the statesmen Prime Ministers, the Walpoles and Peels and Palmerstons ; or with the men of genius, the Pitts and Disraelis and Gladstones. Lord Townshend had performed the regular functions of a statesman in training at that time. He had been an Envoy Extraordinary, and had made treaties. He was a brother-in-law of Walpole. Just now, Walpole and he are friends as well as connections ; the time came when Walpole and he were destined to quarrel ; and then Townshend conducted himself with remarkable forbearance, self-restraint, and dignity. He was an honest and respectable man, blunt of speech, and of rugged homespun intelligence,



about whom, since his day, the world is little concerned. Such name as he had is almost absorbed in the more brilliant reputation of his grandson—the spoiled child of the House of Commons, as Burke called him—that Charles Townshend of the famous “Champagne Speech”; the Chancellor of the Exchequer of whom we shall hear a good deal later on, and who, by the sheer force of animal spirits, feather-headed talents and ignorance, became, in a certain perverse sense, the father of American Independence.

The Second Secretary of State, James, afterwards Earl, Stanhope, was a man of very different mould. Stanhope was one of the few Englishmen who have held high position in arms and politics. He had been a brilliant soldier; had fought in Flanders and Spain; had distinguished himself at Barcelona, even under a commander like Peterborough, whose daring spirit rendered it hard for any subaltern to shine in rivalry; had been himself raised to command, and kept on winning victories until his military genius found itself overcrowded by that of the great French captain, the Duke de Vendôme. His soldier's career came to a premature close; as indeed his whole mortal career did not very long after the time at which we have now arrived. Stanhope was a man of scholarly education, almost a scholar; he had abilities above the common; he had indomitable energy, and was as daring and resolute in the council as in the field. He had a domineering mind, was outspoken and haughty; trampling over other men's opinions as a charge of cavalry treads down the grasses of the field it traverses. He made enemies, and did not heed their enmity. He was single-minded, and, what was not very common in that day, he was free from any love of money or taint of personal greed. He does not rank high among either statesmen or soldiers; but as statesman and soldier together he has made for himself a distinct and a peculiar place. His career will always be remembered without effort by the readers of English history.

A new Privy Council was formed, which included the name of Marlborough. The Duchess of Marlborough urged her husband not to accept this office of barren honour. It is said that the one only occasion on which

Marlborough had ventured to act against the dictation of his wife was when he thus placed himself again at the disposal of the King. He never ceased to regret that he had not followed her advice in this instance as in others. His proud heart soon burnt within him when he found that he was appreciated, understood, and put aside; mocked with a semblance of power, humiliated under the pretext of doing him honour.

Much more humiliating, much more ominous, however, was the reception awaiting Oxford and Bolingbroke. From the moment of his arrival, the King showed himself determined to take no friendly notice of the great Tories. Oxford found it most difficult even to get audience of his Majesty. The morning after the King's arrival, Oxford was allowed, after much pressure and many entreaties, to wait upon the Sovereign, and to kiss his hand. He was received in chilling silence. Truly, it was not likely that much conversation would take place, seeing that George spoke no English and Oxford spoke no German. But there was something in the King's demeanour towards him, as well as in the mere fact that no words were exchanged, which must have told Oxford that his enemies were in triumph over him, and were determined to bring about his doom. Even before George had landed in England he had sent directions that Bolingbroke should be removed from his place of Secretary of State. On the last day of August this order was executed in a manner which made it seem especially premature, and even ignominious. The Privy Council, as it stood, was then dissolved, and the new Council appointed, which consisted of only thirty-three members. Somers was one of this new Council, but in name alone; his growing years, his increasing infirmities, and the flickering decay of his once great intellect, allowed him but little chance of ever again taking an active part in the affairs of the State. Marlborough was named a member of it, as we have seen. The Lords Justices ordered that all despatches addressed to the Secretary of State should be brought to them. Bolingbroke himself had to wait at the door of the Council Chamber with his despatch-box, to receive the commands of his new masters.

France, tired of war, recognised the new King of England. The coronation of the King took place on October 20; Bolingbroke and Oxford were both present. We learn from some of the journals of the day, that it had rained on the previous afternoon, and that many of the Jacobites promised themselves that the rain would continue to the next day, and so retard, if only for a few hours, the hateful ceremony. But their hopes of foul weather were disappointed. The rain did not keep on, and the coronation took place successfully in London; not, however, without some Jacobite disturbances in Bristol, Birmingham, Norwich, and other places.

The Government soon after issued a proclamation dissolving the existing Parliament, and another summoning a new one. The latter called on all the electors of the kingdom, in consequence of the evil designs of men disaffected to the King, "to have a particular regard to such as showed a firmness to the Protestant Succession when it was in danger." The appeal was clearly unconstitutional, according to our ideas, but it was made, probably, in answer to James Stuart's manifesto a few weeks before, in which the Pretender reasserted his claims to the throne, and declared that he had only waited until the death "of the Princess, our sister, of whose good intentions towards us we could not for some time past well doubt."

The general elections showed an overwhelming majority for the Whigs. The not unnatural fluctuations of public opinion at such a time are effectively illustrated by the sudden and complete manner in which the majority was transferred, now to this side, now to that. Just at this moment, and indeed for long after, the Whigs had it all their own way. Only a few years ago their fortunes had seemed to have sunk to zero, and now they had mounted again to the zenith. The King opened Parliament in person. The speech was read for him by the Lord Chancellor, for the very good reason that George could not pronounce English. That speech declared that the established Constitution—Church and State—should be the rule of his government. The debate on the Address was remarkable. In the House of Lords the Address contained



the words—"To recover the reputation of this kingdom." Bolingbroke made his last speech in Parliament. He objected to these words, and proposed an amendment, with an eloquence and an energy worthy of his best days, and with a front as seemingly fearless as though his fortunes were at the full. He contended that to talk of "recovering" the reputation of the kingdom was to cast a stigma on the glory of the late reign. He proposed to substitute the word "maintain" for the word "recover." His amendment was defeated by sixty-six votes to thirty-three: exactly two to one. In the House of Commons the Address, which was moved by Walpole, contained words still more significant. The Address spoke of the Pretender's attempts "to stir up your Majesty's subjects to rebellion," declared that his hopes "were built upon the measures that had been taken for some time past in Great Britain," and added: "It shall be our business to trace out those measures whereon he placed his hopes, and to bring the authors of them to condign punishment." These words were the first distinct intimation given by the Ministers that they intended to call their predecessors to account. Stanhope stated their resolve still more explicitly in the course of the debate. Bolingbroke sat and heard it announced that he and his late colleague were to be impeached for high treason. He put on an appearance of serenity and philosophic boldness for a time, but in his heart he had already taken fright. For a few days he went about in public, showing himself ostentatiously, with all the manner of a man who is happy in his unwonted ease, and is only anxious for relaxation and amusement. He professed to be rejoiced by his release from office, and those of his friends who wished to please him offered him their formal congratulations on his promotion to a retirement that placed him above the petty struggles and cares of political life. He visited Drury Lane Theatre on March 26, 1715, went about amongst his friends, chatted, flirted, paid compliments, received compliments, arranged to attend another performance at the same theatre the following evening. That same night he disguised himself as a serving-man, slipped quietly down to Dover, escaped

from thence to Calais, and went hurriedly on to Paris; ready to place himself, and his talents, and his influence—such as it might be—at the service of the Stuarts.

There seems good reason to believe that the Duke of Marlborough, by a master-stroke of treachery, avenged himself on Bolingbroke at this crisis in Bolingbroke's fortunes, and decided the flight to Paris. Bolingbroke sought out Marlborough, and appealing to the memories of their old friendship, begged for advice and assistance. Marlborough professed the utmost concern for Bolingbroke, and gave him to understand that it was agreed upon between the Ministers of the Crown and the Dutch Government that Bolingbroke was to be brought to the scaffold. Marlborough pretended to have certain knowledge of this, and he told Bolingbroke that his only chance was in flight. Bolingbroke fled, and thereby seemed to admit in advance all the accusations of his enemies and to abandon his friends to their mercy. One of Bolingbroke's biographers appears to consider that on the whole this was well done by Marlborough, and that it was only a fair retaliation on Bolingbroke. In any case, it is clear that Bolingbroke acted in strict consistency with the principles on which he had moulded his public and private life: he consulted for himself first of all. It may have been necessary for his own safety that he should fly from the threatening storm. It is certain that he had bitter and unrelenting enemies. These would not have spared him if they could have made out a case against him. No one but Bolingbroke himself could know to the full how much of a case there was against him. But his flight, if it saved himself, might have been fatal to those who were in league with him for the return of the Stuarts. If he had stood firm it is probable that his enemies would not have been able to prevail any farther against him than they were able to prevail in his absence against Harley, whom his flight so seriously compromised. Nobody needs to be told that the one last hope for conspirators whose plans are being discovered is for all in the plot to stand together or all to fly together. Bolingbroke does not seem to have given his associates any chance of considering the position and making up their minds.

A Committee of Secrecy was struck. It was composed of twenty-one members, and the hearts of Bolingbroke's friends may well have sunk within them as they studied the names upon its roll. Many of its members were conscientious Whigs—Whigs of conviction, eaten up with the zeal of their house, like James Stanhope himself, and Spencer Cowper and Lord Coningsby and young Lord Finch and Pulteney, now in his period of full devotion to Walpole. There were Whig lawyers, like Lechmere; there were steady, obtuse Whigs, like Edward Wortley Montagu, husband of the brilliant and beautiful woman whom Pope first loved and then hated. There was Aislabe, then Treasurer of the Navy, afterwards Chancellor of the Exchequer, who came to disgrace at the bursting of the South Sea Bubble, and who would at any time have elected to go with the strongest, and loved to tread the path lighted by his own impressions as to his own interests. Thomas Pitt, grandfather to the great Chatham, the "Governor Pitt" of Madras, whose diamonds were objects of admiration to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, was a member of the committee; and so was Sir Richard Onslow, afterwards Speaker of the House of Commons, and uncle of the much more celebrated "Speaker Onslow." From none of these men could Bolingbroke have much favour to expect. Those who were honest and unselfish would be ill-disposed towards him because of their honesty and unselfishness; those who were not exactly honest and certainly not unselfish would, by reason of their character, probably be only too anxious to help the winning party to get rid of him. But the names that must have showed most formidable in the eyes of Bolingbroke and his friends were those of Robert Walpole and Richard Hampden. Two years before this time the persistent enmity of Bolingbroke had sent Walpole to the Tower, branded with the charge of corruption, and expelled from the House of Commons. Now things are changed indeed. Walpole is chairman of the committee, and "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" St. John had threatened Hampden—who was a lineal descendant of the Hampden of the Civil War—with the Tower for daring to censure the Ministry of the day, and was only deterred from carrying



out his threat by prudent counsellors, who showed him that Hampden would be only too proud to share Walpole's imprisonment. These were men not likely to forget or to forgive such injuries.

At first the Tories seem scarcely to have believed that the Whigs would push their policy to extremities. The eccentric Jacobite Shippen publicly scoffed at the committee, and declared in the House of Commons that its investigations would vanish into smoke. Such confidence was quickly and rudely shattered. June 9 saw a memorable scene. On that day Robert Walpole, as chairman of the Committee of Secrecy, rose and told the House of Commons that he had to present a report, but that he was commanded by the committee to move in the first instance that a warrant be issued by the Speaker to apprehend several persons who should be named by him, and that meantime no member be permitted to leave the House. Thereupon the lobbies were cleared of all strangers, and the Sergeant-at-Arms stood at the door in order to prevent any member from going out. Then Walpole named Mr. Matthew Prior, Mr. Thomas Harley, and other persons, and the Speaker issued his warrant for their arrest. Mr. Prior was arrested at once; Mr. Harley a few hours afterwards.

Prior was the poet, the friend and correspondent of Bolingbroke. He had been much engaged in the negotiations for the Treaty of Utrecht, and had at one time actually held the rank of English Envoy. He had but lately returned from Paris; had arrived in London just before Bolingbroke's flight. Thomas Harley, cousin of Lord Oxford, had also been concerned in the negotiations in a less formal and more underhand sort of way. When the arrests had been ordered Walpole informed the House that the Committee of Secrecy had agreed upon their report, and had commanded him to submit it to the House of Commons. The report, which Walpole himself, as chairman of the committee, had drawn up, was a document of great length; it occupied many hours in the reading. But the time could not have seemed tedious to those who listened. The report was an indictment and a State paper combined. It arrayed with the utmost skill all the

evidences and arguments, all the facts and all the passages of correspondence, necessary to make out a case against the accused statesmen. It carried with it, beyond question, the complete historical condemnation of Oxford and Bolingbroke in all that related to the Treaty of Utrecht. Never was it more conclusively established for the historian that Ministers of State had used the basest means to bring about the basest objects. It was made clear as light that the national interests and the national honour had been sacrificed for partisan and for personal purposes. Objects in themselves criminal for statesmen to aim at had been sought by means which would have been shameful even if employed for justifiable ends. Had Bolingbroke and Oxford been endeavouring to save the State by the arts which they employed to sacrifice it, their conduct would have called for the condemnation of all honest men. But as regards the transactions with James Stuart there was ample ground shown for suspicion, there was good reason to conjecture or to infer, but there was no positive evidence of intended treason. An historian reading over the report would in all probability come to the conclusion that Oxford and Bolingbroke had been plotting with James Stuart, but he would not see in it satisfactory grounds for an impeachment. No jury would convict on such evidence; no jury probably would even leave the box for the purpose of considering their verdict. In the course of the events that were soon to follow it was placed beyond any doubt that Bolingbroke and Oxford had all along been trying to arrange for the return of the Stuarts. They were not driven to throw themselves in despair into the Stuart cause by reason of harsh proceedings taken against them by their enemies in England; they had been "pipe-laying," to use an expressive American word, for the Stuart restoration during all the closing years of Queen Anne's reign. The reader must decide for himself as to the degree of moral or political guilt involved in such transactions. It has to be remembered that nearly half—some still say more than half—of the population of these countries was in favour of such a restoration, and that Anne herself unquestionably leaned to the same view. What is certain is

that Oxford and Bolingbroke were planning for it. But what seems equally clear is that the report of the Secret Committee did not contain satisfactory evidence on which to sustain a charge of treason. Swift is not a trustworthy witness on these subjects, but he is quite right when he says that the allegations were "more proper materials to furnish out a pamphlet than an impeachment."

Bolingbroke's friends must have felt deeply grieved at his flight when they heard the statement of the case against him. Even as regards the Treaty of Utrecht, it seems questionable whether the historical conviction assuredly obtained against him by the contents of the report would, in the existing condition of politics and parties, have been followed by any sort of judicial conviction, whether in a court of law or a trial by Parliament.

The day after the reading of the report gave Walpole his long desired revenge: he impeached Bolingbroke of high treason. There was a dead silence in the House when he had finished. Then two of Bolingbroke's friends, Mr. Hungerford and General Ross, mustered up courage to speak a few words for their lost leader. The star of the morning, the Tory Lucifer, had fallen indeed! Lord Coningsby got up and made a clever little set speech. Walpole had impeached the hand, and Lord Coningsby impeached the head; Walpole had impeached the clerk, and Coningsby impeached the justice; Walpole had impeached the scholar, and Coningsby impeached the master. This head, this justice, this master, was, of course, the Lord Oxford. As a piece of dramatic declamation Coningsby's impeachment was telling enough; as an historical presentation of the case against the two men it was absurd. Through all Anne's later years Oxford had been nothing and Bolingbroke everything. On the very eve of the Queen's death Bolingbroke had secured his triumph over his former friend by driving Oxford out of all office. Had Oxford been first impeached and the speech of Lord Coningsby been aimed at Bolingbroke, it would have been strikingly appropriate; as it was, it became meaningless rhetoric. Next day Oxford went to the House of Lords, and tried to appear cool and unconcerned, but, according



to a contemporary account, "finding that most members avoided sitting near him, and that even the Earl Powlet was shy of exchanging a few words with him, he was dashed out of countenance, and retired out of the House."

Impeachments were now the order of the day. The loyal Whigs of the Commons were incessantly passing between the Upper House and the Lower with articles of impeachment, and still further articles when the first were not found to be strong enough for the purpose. Stanhope impeached the Duke of Ormond; Aislalie impeached Lord Strafford—not of high treason, but of high crimes and misdemeanours; Strafford was accused of being not only "the tool of a Frenchified ministry," but the adviser of most pernicious measures. Strafford's part in the negotiations had not been one of any considerable importance. He had been sent as English Plenipotentiary to the Congress at Utrecht. Associated with him as Second Plenipotentiary was Dr. John Robinson, then Bishop of Bristol, and more lately made Bishop of London, the churchman on whom the office of the Privy Seal had been conferred by Harley, to the great anger of the Whigs. It was said that Strafford, in his high and mighty way, had refused flatly to accept a mere poet like Prior for his official colleague. Strafford had, in reality, little or nothing to do with the making of the treaty. The negotiations were carried on between Bolingbroke and the Marquis de Torcy, French Secretary of State and nephew of the great Colbert; and when these wanted agents they employed men more clever and less pompous than Strafford. Aislalie, in bringing on his motion, drew a curious distinction between Strafford and Strafford's official colleague. "The good and pious Prelate," he said, had been only a cypher, "and seemed to have been put at the head of that negotiation only to palliate the iniquity of it under the sacredness of his character." He was glad, therefore, that nothing could be charged upon the Bishop, and complacently observed that the course taken with regard to Dr. Robinson, who was not to be impeached, "ought to convince the world that the Church was not in danger." There was some wisdom as well as wit in a remark made thereupon by a

member of the House in opposing the motion — “the Bishop, it seems, is to have the benefit of clergy.”

The motions for the impeachment of Bolingbroke and Oxford were carried without a division. This fact, however, would be little indication as to the result of an impeachment after a long trial, and after the minds of men had cooled down on both sides; when Whigs had grown less passionate in their hate, and Tories had recovered their courage to sustain their friends. Even at the moment the impeachment of the Duke of Ormond was a matter of far greater difficulty. Ormond had many friends even among the most genuine supporters of the Hanoverian succession. He was the idol of the High Church party; at all events of the High Church mob. Had he acted with anything like a steady resolve he would, in all probability, have escaped even impeachment. To some of the most serious charges against him, his refusal, for instance, to attack the French while the secret negotiations for the Treaty of Utrecht were going on, he could fairly have pleaded that he had acted only as a soldier taking positive instructions and carrying them out. His clear and obvious policy would have been to take the quiet stand of a man conscious of innocence and therefore not afraid of the scrutiny of any committee or the judgment of any tribunal.

But Ormond hesitated. Ormond was always hesitating. Many of his influential supporters urged him to seek an audience of the King at once, and to profess to George his unfailing and incorruptible loyalty. Had he taken such a course it is not at all unlikely that the King might have caused the measures against him to be abandoned. Ormond's friends indeed were full of hope that they could, in any case, induce the Ministry not to persevere in the proceedings against him. On the other hand, he was urged to join in an insurrection in the West of England, towards which, beyond doubt, he had already himself taken some steps. The less cautious of his friends assured him that his appearance in the West would be welcomed with open arms, and would bring a vast number of adherents round him, and that a powerful blow could be struck at once against the Hanoverian succession. Ormond,

however, took neither the one course nor the other. To do him justice he was far too honourable for the utter perfidy of the first course, and it is doing him no injustice to say that he was too feeble for the daring enterprise of the second. It is believed that Ormond had an interview with Oxford before his flight, and that he urged Oxford to attempt an escape in terms not unlike those with which William the Silent in Goethe's play endeavours to persuade Egmont not to remain in the power of Philip the Second. Then Ormond himself fled to France. He lived there for thirty years after. He led a pleasant, easy, harmless life, and was completely forgotten in England for years and years before his death. More than twenty years after his flight he is described by vivacious Mary Wortley Montagu as "one who seems to have forgotten every part of his past life, and to be of no party." He was a weak man, with only a very faint outline of a character ; but he was more honourable and consistent than was common with the men of his time. When he had once taken up a cause or a principle, he held to it. He was the very opposite to Bolingbroke. Bolingbroke had genius and force without principle. Ormond had principle without genius or force.

Two, then, of the great accused peers were beyond the reach of the House of Lords. Oxford alone remained. On July 9, 1715, articles of impeachment were brought up against him. The impeachment does not seem to have been very substantial in its character. The great majority of its articles referred to the conduct of Oxford with regard to the Treaty of Utrecht. One article accused him of having abused his influence over her Majesty by prevailing upon her to exercise "in the most unprecedented and dangerous manner" her prerogative by the creation of twelve Peers in December 1711. A motion that Oxford be committed to the Tower was made, and on this motion he spoke a few words which were at once ingenious and dignified. He asserted his innocence of any treasonable practice or thought, and declared that what he had done was done in obedience to the positive orders of the Queen. He asked the House what might not happen if Ministers of State, acting on the immediate commands of their



Sovereign, were afterwards to be made accountable for their proceedings. Then in a few words he commended his cause to the justice of his brother peers, and took leave of the House of Lords, as he put it, "perhaps for ever." Such an impeachment would have been impossible in more recent days. If Oxford had been accused of treasonable dealings with the Stuarts, and if evidence could have been brought home to him, there indeed might have been a reasonable ground for impeachment. But there was no sufficient evidence for any such purpose, and to impeach a statesman simply because he had taken a political course which was afterwards disapproved by the nation, and which was discredited by results, was simply to say that any failure in the policy of a Minister of the Crown might make him liable to impeachment when his enemies came into power. The Peace of Utrecht, bad as it was, had been condoned, or rather approved of, by two successive Parliaments. Shrewsbury, who was now in high favour, had been actively concerned in its promotion. It was a question of compromise altogether, on which politicians were entitled to form the strongest opinions. No doubt the enemies of the Tory party had ample ground for condemning and denouncing the Peace. But the part which a statesman had taken in bringing about the Peace could not, according to our modern ideas, form any just ground of ministerial impeachment. Much more reasonably might the statesmen of a later day have been impeached who, by their blundering and their obstinacy, brought about the armed resistance and the final independence of the North American colonies. It is curious, in our eyes, to find Oxford defending his conduct on the ground that he had simply obeyed the positive orders of his Sovereign. The Minister would run more risk of impeachment, in our days, who declared that he had acted in some great public crisis simply in obedience to his Sovereign's orders, than if he were to stand accountable for the greatest errors, the grossest blunders, committed on the judgment and on the responsibility of himself and his colleagues.

Oxford was committed to the Tower, whither he went escorted by an immense popular procession of his admirers,

who cheered vociferously for him and for High Church together. He may now be said to drop out of our history completely. He was destined to linger in long confinement, almost like one forgotten by friends and enemies. We shall have to tell afterwards how he petitioned for a trial, and was brought to trial, and in what fashion he came to be acquitted by his peers. The remainder of his life he passed in happy quietude among his books and curious manuscripts : the books and manuscripts which formed the original stock of the Harleian Library, afterwards completed by his son. Harley lived until 1724, and was not an old man even then—only sixty-three. It is not necessary that in this work we should concern ourselves much more about him. Despite all the praises of his friends, some of them men of the highest intellectual gifts, like Swift and Pope, there does not seem to have been any great quality, intellectual or moral, in Harley. He had a narrow and feeble mind ; he was incapable of taking a large view of anything ; he was selfish and deceitful ; although it has to be said that sometimes that which men call deceit in him was but a lack of the capacity to look straight before him and make up his mind. He often led astray those who acted with him merely because his own confusion of intellect and want of defined purpose were leading himself astray. Perhaps the most dignified passage in his life was that which showed him calmly awaiting the worst, in London, when men like Bolingbroke and Ormond had chosen to seek safety in flight. Yet even the course which he took in this instance seems to have been rather the result of indecision than of independent self-sufficing courage and resolve. He does not appear to have been able to decide upon anything until the time had passed when movement of any kind would have availed, and so he remained where he was. Many a man has gained credit for courage, and has seemed to surround himself with dignity, because at a moment of alarm when others did this or that he was unable quite to make up his mind as to what he ought to do, and so did nothing, and let the world go by.

On September 17, Norroy King at Arms came solemnly down to the House of Lords, and razed the names of

Ormond and of Bolingbroke from the roll of peers. Bolingbroke had some consolation of a sham kind. He had wished and schemed to be Earl of Bolingbroke before his fall, and now his new King, James of St. Germain's, had given him the patent of enhanced nobility. If he ceased to be a viscount in the eyes of English peers and of English heralds, he was still an earl in the Chevalier's court. Bolingbroke had too keen a sense of humour not to be painfully aware of the irony of the situation. Nor was he likely to find much satisfaction in the peerage which the Government had just conferred upon his father, Sir Henry St. John, by creating him Baron of Battersea and Viscount St. John. Sir Henry St. John was an idle, careless *roué*, a haunter of St. James's coffee-houses, living in the manner and in the memories of the Restoration, listlessly indifferent to all parties, leaning perhaps a little to the Whigs. He had no manner of sympathy with his son or appreciation of his genius. When the son was made a peer the father only said, "Well, Harry, I thought thee would be hanged, but now I see thee wilt be beheaded." The father himself was once very near being hanged. In his wild youth he had killed a man in a quarrel, and was tried for murder and condemned to death, and then pardoned by the King, Charles II., in consideration it is said of a liberal money-payment to the Merry Monarch and his yet more merry mistresses.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE WHITE COCKADE

WHEN Bolingbroke got to Paris he did not immediately attach himself to the service of James. Even then, and there, he still appears to have been undecided. Probably, if he had seen even then a chance of returning with safety to England, if the impeachments had not been going on, and if any manner of overture had been made to him from London, he would forthwith have dropped the Jacobite



cause, and returned to profess his loyalty to the reigning English Sovereign. After a while, however, seeing that there was no chance for him at home, he went openly into the cause of the Stuarts, and accepted the office of Secretary of State to James. It must have been a trying position for a man of Bolingbroke's genius and ambition when he found himself thus compelled to put up with an empty office at a sham court. Bolingbroke's desire was to play on a great stage with a vast admiring audience. He loved the heat and passion of debate: he enjoyed his own rhetorical triumphs. He must have been chilled and cramped indeed in a situation which allowed him no opportunity of displaying his most splendid and genuine qualities, while it constantly called on him for the exercise of the very qualities which he had least at hand. Nature had never meant him for a conspirator, or even for a subtle political intriguer; nor had Nature ever intended him to be the adherent of a lost cause. All that could have made a position like his tolerable to a man of his peculiar capacity would have been faith in the cause—that faith which would have prevented him from seeing any but its noble and exalted qualities, and would have made him forget himself in its hopes, its perils, its triumphs, and its disasters. On the contrary, it would seem that Bolingbroke found it difficult to take the Stuart cause seriously, even when he was himself playing the part of its leading statesman. A critical observer writes from Paris in the early part of the year 1716, saying that he believed Bolingbroke's chief fault was “that he could not play his part with a grave enough face; he could not help laughing now and then at such kings and queens.” Meantime, Bolingbroke amused himself in his moments of recreation after his old fashion. He indulged in amour after amour, intrigue after intrigue. Lord Chesterfield said of him, that “though nobody spoke and wrote better upon philosophy than Lord Bolingbroke, no man in the world had less share of philosophy than himself. The least trifle, such as the over-roasting of a leg of mutton, would strangely disturb and ruffle his temper.” On the other hand, a glance from a pretty woman, or a glimpse of her ankle, would send all Boling-

broke's political combinations and philosophical speculations flying into the air, and convert him in a moment from the statesman or the philosopher into the merest *petit-maître*, maccaroni, and gallant.

Louis the Fourteenth refused to give open assistance to the cause of the Stuarts, but he was willing enough to lend any help that he could in private to Bolingbroke and to them. His death was the first severe blow to the cause which Bolingbroke now represented. Louis the Fourteenth was, according to Bolingbroke himself, the best friend James then had. "When I engaged," says Bolingbroke, "in this business, my principal dependence was on his personal character—my hopes sank as he declined, and died when he expired." The Regent, Duke of Orleans, was a man who, with all his coarse and unrestricted dissipation, had some political capacity and even statesmanship. He saw that the Stuart was a sinking, the Hanoverian a rising, cause. Even when the two seemed most nearly balanced it yet appeared to Orleans, if we may quote a phrase more often used in our days than in his, that the one cause was only half alive, but the other was half dead. Orleans, moreover, had a good deal of that feeling which was more strongly marked still in a Duke of Orleans of a later day. He had a liking for England and for English ways; he was, indeed, rather inclined to affect the political manners of an English statesman. He therefore leaned to the side of the Government established in England; and, at the urgent request of the English Ambassador in Paris, he acted with some energy in preventing the sailing of vessels intended for the uses of an expedition to the English coast.

James Stuart seemed as if he were determined still further to imperil the chances of his family, and to embarrass his adherents. The right moment for a movement in his favour had been allowed to pass away, and now, with characteristic blundering and ill fortune, he seized upon the most unsuitable time that could possibly have been employed for such an attempt. Something might have been done perhaps, a temporary alteration in the dynasty might have been obtained, if energy and decision had been

shown in that momentous interval when Queen Anne lay dying. But when that time had been allowed to pass, the clear policy of the Chevalier was to permit the fears of Englishmen to go to sleep for a while, to endeavour to reorganise his plans and his party ; to wait until a certain reaction should set in, a reaction very likely to come about because of the apparent incapacity and the unattractive character of George the First, and then at some timely hour, with well-matured preparations, to strike an energetic blow. George the First was only a year on the throne when the adherents of James got up a miserable attempt at an insurrection.

There were three conditions under which, and under which alone, an insurrection just then would have had a reasonable chance of success. These conditions were fully recognised and understood by the Jacobite leaders in England, Scotland, and France. The first was that a rising should take place at once in England and in Scotland ; the second that the Chevalier in person should take the field ; and the third that France should give positive assistance to the enterprise. The Jacobite cause was strong in the south-western counties of England, and there the influence of the Duke of Ormond was strong likewise. The general arrangement, therefore, in the minds of the Jacobite chiefs was that James Stuart should make his appearance in Scotland, that at the same moment the Duke of Ormond should raise the standard of revolt in some of the south-western counties, and that France should assist the expedition with men, money, and arms. When James, acting against the advice of his best counsellors, resolved on striking a blow at once, two of the necessary conditions were clearly wanting. France was not willing to give any actual assistance, and Ormond was not ready to raise the standard of rebellion in England.

Ormond's sudden appearance in Paris struck dismay into the hearts of the Jacobite counsellors, men and women, there. It had been distinctly understood that he was to remain in England, and that, if threatened with arrest, he was to hasten to one of the western counties, where he and his friends were strong, and strike a sudden blow. He was



to seize Bristol, Exeter, Plymouth, and other towns, and set the Stuart flag flying all over that part of England. When he appeared in France, a mere solitary fugitive, all men of sense saw that the game was up. Bolingbroke at once sent through safe hands a clear statement of the condition of things, to be laid before Lord Mar. Bolingbroke's object was to restrain Mar from any movement in the altered state of affairs. The letter, however, came too late. Mar had already made his movement towards the Highlands: there was no stopping the enterprise then—the rebellion had taken fire. James was determined more than ever to go. His arguments were the arguments of mere desperation. "I cannot but see," he wrote to Bolingbroke, "that affairs grow daily worse and worse by delays, and that, as the business is now more difficult than it was six months ago, so these difficulties will, in all human appearance, rather increase than diminish. Violent diseases must have violent remedies, and to use none has, in some cases, the same effect as to use bad ones." Indeed, it was impossible that the Chevalier himself or the Duke of Ormond could hold back. Both had personal courage quite enough for such an attempt. On the 28th of October James Stuart, after many delays, set out in disguise, and travelled westward to St. Malo. Ormond sailed from the coast of Normandy to that of Devonshire, but found there no sign of any arrangement for a rising. His plans had long been known to the English Government, and measures had been taken to frustrate them. In that little Jacobite Parliament sitting in Paris, which Bolingbroke spoke of with such contempt, and from which, as he puts it, "no sex was excluded," there was hardly any secret made of the projects they were carrying on. Before the sudden appearance of Ormond in Paris they had counted, with the utmost confidence, on a full success, and were already talking of the Restoration as if it were an accomplished fact. Every word they uttered which it was of the least importance for the British Government to hear, was instantly made known to Lord Stair, the new English Ambassador—a resolute and capable man, a brilliant soldier, an astute and bold diplomatist, equal to any craft, ready for any emergency,

charming to all, dear to his friends, very formidable to his enemies. Ormond found that, as he had let the favourable moment slip when he fled from England to France, there was now no means whatever of recalling the lost opportunity. He returned to Brittany, and there he found the Chevalier preparing to start for Scotland. After various goings and comings the Chevalier was at last enabled to embark at Dunkirk in a small vessel, with a few guns and half a dozen Jacobite officers to attend him, and he made for the Scottish coast.

About the same time, and as if in obedience to some word of command from France, there was a general and almost simultaneous outburst of Jacobite demonstration in England, amounting in most places to riot. In London, and all over England, so far as one can judge, the popular feeling appears to have been rather with the Jacobites than against them. Stout Jacobites toasted a mysterious person called Job, who had no connection with the prophet, but whose name contained the initial letters of James, Ormond, and Bolingbroke; and "Kit" was no less popular because it stood for "King James III."; while the mysterious symbolism of the Three "B's" implied "Best Born Briton," and so the Chevalier de St. George. The Chevalier's birthday—the tenth of June—was celebrated with wild outbursts of enthusiasm in several places. Stuart-loving Oxford in especial made a brave show of its white roses. The Loyalists, who endeavoured to do a similar honour to the birthday of King George, were often violently assailed by mobs. In many places the windows of houses whose inmates refused to illuminate in honour of the Chevalier were broken; William the Third was burnt in effigy in various parts of London, and in many towns throughout the country. So serious at one period did the revulsion of Jacobite feeling appear to be, that it was thought necessary to form a camp in Hyde Park, and to bring together a large body of troops there. The Life Guards and Horse Grenadiers, three battalions of the Foot Guards, the Duke of Argyll's regiment, and several pieces of cannon were established in the camp. By a curious coincidence the troops were reviewed by King George, the Prince of Wales,

and the Duke of Marlborough, on the 25th August 1715, the very day on which, as we shall presently see, the Highland clans set up the standard of the Stuarts at Braemar, in Scotland. The camp had a certain amount of practical advantage in it, independently of its supposed political necessity—it made Hyde Park safe at night. Before the camp was established, and after it was broken up, the Park appears to have been little better than Bagshot Heath or Hounslow Heath: it was the favourite parade ground of highway robbers and murderers. The soldiers themselves were occasionally suspected of playing the part of highwaymen. “A man in those days,” says Scott, “might have all the external appearance of a gentleman, and yet turn out to be a highwayman,” and “the profession of the polite and accomplished adventurer who nicked you out of your money at White’s, or bowled you out of it at Marybone, was often united with that of the professed ruffian who, on Bagshot Heath or Finchley Common, commanded his brother beau to stand and deliver.” “Robbers, a fertile and alarming theme, filled up every vacancy, and the names of the Golden Farmer, the Flying Highwayman, Jack Needham, and other Beggar’s Opera heroes, were familiar in our mouths as household words.” The revulsion of Jacobite feeling actually showed itself sometimes amongst the soldiers in the camp. Accounts published at the time tell us of men having been flogged and shot for wearing Jacobite emblems in their caps. Perhaps in mentioning this Hyde Park camp it may not be inappropriate to notice the fact that General Macartney, who had figured in a terrible tragedy in the Park two or three years before, returned to England, and obtained the favour of George by bringing over six thousand soldiers from Holland to assist the King. General Macartney was the man who had acted as second to Lord Mohun in the fatal duel in Hyde Park on the 15th November 1712, when both Mohun and the Duke of Hamilton were killed. Macartney escaped to Holland, and was charged by the Duke of Hamilton’s second with having stabbed the Duke through the heart while Colonel Hamilton was endeavouring to raise him from the ground. Macartney came back and took his trial,



but was only found guilty of manslaughter, that is to say, found guilty of having taken part in the duel, and escaped without punishment. Probably Macartney, and Hamilton, and Mohun, and the Duke are best remembered in our time because of the effect which that fatal meeting had upon the fortunes of *Beatrice Esmond*.

The insurrection had already broken out in Scotland. John Erskine, eleventh Earl of Mar, set himself up as lieutenant-general in the cause of the Chevalier. Lord Mar was a man of much courage and some capacity. He had held high office under Queen Anne. One of the biographers of that period describes Mar as a devoted adherent of the Stuarts. His career is indeed a fair illustration of the sort of thing which then sometimes passed for devoted adherence to a cause. When King George reached England, he dismissed Mar from office, suspecting him of sympathy with the Jacobite movement. Mar had expected something of the kind, and had written an obsequious and a grovelling letter to George, in which he spoke of the King's "happy accession," professed unbounded devotion to the House of Hanover, and promised that "You shall ever find in me as faithful a subject as ever any king had." The new King, however, declined to trust to the faithfulness of this subject; and a year after, the faithful subject had returned to his Jacobite convictions, and was gathering the Highland clans in James Stuart's name.

The clans were got together at Braemar. The white cockade was mounted there by clan after clan; the Macintoshes being the first to display it as the emblem of the Stuart cause. Inverness was seized. King James was proclaimed at several places, notably at Dundee, by Graham, the brother of "conquering Graham," Bonnie Dundee, the fearless, cruel, clever Claverhouse who fell at Killiecrankie. Perth was secured. The force under Mar's leadership grew greater every day. He had begun with a handful of men. He had now a little army. He had set up his standard almost at haphazard at Braemar, and now nearly all the country north of the Tay was in the hands of the Jacobites.

The Duke of Argyll was put in command of the royal forces, and arrived in Scotland in the middle of September,

1715. He hastened to the camp, which had been got together somehow at Stirling. He came there almost literally alone. He brought no soldiers with him. He found few soldiers there to receive him. Under his command he had altogether about a thousand foot, and half as many dragoons, the latter consisting in great measure of the famous and excellent Scots Greys. His prospects looked indeed very doubtful. He could expect little or no assistance from his own clan. They had work enough to do in guarding against a possible attack from some of the followers of Lord Mar. Glasgow, Dumfries, and other towns were likewise in imminent danger from some of the Highland clans, and were kept in a continual agony of apprehension. It seemed likely enough that Argyll might soon be surrounded at Stirling. If Mar had only made a forward movement it is impossible to say what degree of success he might not have accomplished. It seems almost marvellous, when we look back and survey the state of things, to see what a miserable force the Government had to rely upon. In the whole country they had only about eight thousand men. They had more men abroad than at home, and in the critical condition of things which still prevailed upon the Continent, it did not seem clear that they could, except in the very last extremity, bring home many of the men whom they kept abroad. Of that little force of eight thousand soldiers they did not venture to send a considerable proportion up to the North. They had, perhaps, good reason. They did not know yet where the serious blow was to be struck for the Stuart cause. Many of George's counsellors still looked upon the movement in Scotland as something merely in the nature of a feint. They believed that the real blow would yet be struck by Ormond in the West of England.

But the evil fortune which hung over the Stuart cause in all its later days clung to it now. There was no conceivable reason why Mar should not have marched southward. The forces of the King were few in number, and were not well placed for the purpose of making any considerable resistance. But in an enterprise like that of Mar all depends upon rapidity of movement. What we may call the

ultimate resources of the country were in the hands of the King and his adherents. Every day's delay enabled them to grow stronger. Every day's delay beyond a certain time discouraged and weakened the invaders, Mar might, at one critical moment, have swept Argyll's exhausted troops before him, but he was feeble and timorous; he dallied; he let the time pass; he allowed Argyll to get away without making an effort to attack him. It was then that one of the Gordon clan broke into that memorable exclamation, "Oh for one hour of Dundee!"—the exclamation which Byron has paraphrased in the line:

Oh for one hour of blind old Dandolo!

Certainly one hour of Dundee might at more than one crisis in this melancholy struggle have secured for the time the cause of the Stuarts, and won for James at least a temporary occupation of the throne of his ancestors. Mar's little force remained motionless long enough to allow the Duke of Argyll to get sufficient strength to make an attack upon it at Sheriffmuir. Sheriffmuir was not much of a victory. Each side, in fact, claimed the conqueror's honour. Mar was not annihilated, nor Argyll driven back. The Duke of Argyll probably lost more of his men, but, on the other hand, he captured many guns and standards, and he reappeared on the same field the next day, while Mar showed there no more. Tested in the only practical way, it is clear that the Duke of Argyll had the better of it. Lord Mar wanted to do something, and was prevented from doing it at a time when to him everything depended on advance and on success. The Duke of Argyll successfully interposed between Mar and his object, and therefore was clearly the victor.

It is on record that no small share of Mar's ill-success was due to the action, or rather the inaction, of the famous Highland outlaw Rob Roy. He and his clan had joined Mar's standard, but his sympathies seem to have been with Argyll. He had an unusually large body of men under his command, for many of the clan Macpherson had been committed to his leadership, in consequence of the old age of their chief; but at a critical moment he refused to lead his



men to the charge, and stood on a hill with his followers, unconcernedly surveying the fight. It is said that had he kept faith he could have turned the fortunes of the day.

Argyll and the cause he represented could afford to wait, and Mar could not. The insurrection already began to melt. James Stuart himself made his appearance in Scotland. He was characteristically late for Sheriffmuir, and when he did throw himself into the field he seemed unable to take any decisive step, or even to come to any clear decision. He did not succeed in making himself popular, even for the moment, among his followers in Scotland. The occasion was one in which gallant bearing and kingly demeanour would have gone for much, and indeed it is not at all impossible that a leader of a different stamp from James might even then have so inspired the Highland clansmen, and so made use of his opportunity, as to overwhelm Argyll and the Hanoverian forces, and turn the whole crisis to his favour. But James was peculiarly unsuited to an enterprise of the kind. He had graceful manners, a mild, serene temper, and great power of application to work. His personal courage was undoubted, and he was willing enough to risk his own life on any chance; but he had none of the spirit of a commander. He was sometimes weak and sometimes obstinate. His very appearance was not in his favour among the Highland men, to whom he had previously been unknown. He was tall and thin, with pale face, and eyes that wanted fire and expression. His words were few, his behaviour always sedate and somewhat depressed. Here, among the Scottish clansmen on the verge of rebellion, he seemed utterly borne down by the greatness of the enterprise. He was wholly unable to infuse anything like spirit or hope into his followers. On the contrary, his appearance among them, when he did show himself, had a dispiriting and depressing effect on almost every mind. Those who remember the manner and demeanour of the late Louis Napoleon, Emperor of the French, the silent shyness, the appearance of almost constant depression, which were characteristic of that sovereign, will, we think, be easily able to form a clear idea of the effect that James Stuart produced among his

followers in Scotland. He did not care to see the soldiers exercise and handle their arms. He avoided going among them as much as possible. The men at last began to feel a mistrust of his courage—the one great quality which he certainly did not lack. A feeling of something like contempt began to spread abroad. “Can he speak at all?” some of the soldiers asked. He was all ice; his very kindness was freezing. A man like Dundee called to such an enterprise would have set the clans of Scotland aflame with enthusiasm. James Stuart was only a chilling and a dissolving influence. His more immediate military counsellors were like himself, and their only policy seemed to be one of postponement and delay. They advised him against action of every kind. The clansmen grew impatient. At Perth, one devoted Highland chief actually suggested that James should be taken away by force from his advisers, and brought amongst men who were ready to fight. “If he is willing to die like a prince,” said this man, “he will find there are ten thousand gentlemen in Scotland who are willing to die with him.” If James had followed the bent of his own disposition, he might even then have died like a prince, or gone on to a throne. His opponents were as little inclined for action as his own immediate advisers. The Duke of Argyll himself delayed making an advance until peremptory orders were sent to him from London. So long, and with so little excuse, did he delay, that statesmen in London suspected, not unreasonably, that Argyll was still willing to give James Stuart a chance, or was not yet quite certain whether the cause of the Stuarts was wholly lost. It is characteristic of the time that so long as there seemed any possibility of James redeeming his crown Argyll’s own colleagues suspected that Argyll was not willing to put himself personally in the way. At last, however, the peremptory order came that Argyll must advance upon Perth. The moment the advance became apparent, the counsellors of James Stuart insisted on retreat. On a day of ill omen to the Stuart cause, the 30th January, 1716, the anniversary of the day when Charles the First was executed, the retreat from Perth was resolved on. That retreat was the end of the enterprise. Many Jacobites had already made up their

minds that the struggle was over, that there was nothing better to be done than to disperse before the advancing troops of King George, that the sooner the forces of James Stuart melted away and James Stuart himself got back to France, the better. James Stuart went back to France, and the clansmen returned to their homes. Some of the Roman Catholic gentlemen rose in Northumberland, and endeavoured to form a junction with a portion of Mar's force which had come southward to meet them. The English Jacobites, however, were defeated at Preston, and compelled to surrender. After a voyage of five days in a small vessel, James succeeded in reaching Gravelines safely, on the 8th February, 1716. His whole expedition had not occupied him more than six weeks.

It was believed at the time that the counsels of the Duke of Marlborough were mainly instrumental in bringing about the prompt suppression of the rebellion. Marlborough's advice was asked with regard to the military movements and dispositions to be made, and the belief of the day was that it was his counsel, and the manner in which the Government followed it out, which led to the utter overthrow of James Stuart and the dispersion of his followers. Marlborough is said to have actually told in advance the very time at which, if his advice were followed, the rebellion could be put down. Nothing is more likely than that Marlborough's advice should have been sought and should have been given. It would not in the least degree militate against the truth of the story that the outbreak took place so soon after Marlborough had been professing the most devoted attachment to the cause of the Stuarts, and had declared that he would rather cut off his right hand than do anything to injure the claims of the Chevalier St. George. But it would not seem that any advice Marlborough might have given was followed out very strictly in the measures taken to put down the rebellion. We may be sure that Marlborough's would have been military counsel worthy of the greatest commander of his age. But in the measures taken to put down the rebellion we can see nothing but incapacity, vacillation, and even timidity. An energetic man in



Argyll's position, seeing how James Stuart halted and fluctuated, must have made up his mind at once that a rapid and bold movement would finish the rebellion, and we find no such movement made, until at last the most peremptory orders from London compelled Argyll at all hazards to advance. If then Marlborough gave his advice in London, which is very likely, it would seem that, for some reason or other, the advice was not followed by the commanders in the field. The whole story reminds one of the belief long entertained in France, and which we suppose has some votaries there even still, that the great success of the Duke of Wellington in the latter part of the war against Napoleon was due to the military counsels of Dumouriez, then an exile in London.

There was a plan for the capture of Edinburgh Castle, which, like other Stuart enterprises, would have been a great thing if it had only succeeded. Edinburgh Castle was then full of arms, stores, and money. Some eighty of the Jacobites, chiefly Highlanders, contrived a well-laid scheme by which to get possession of the Castle. They managed by bribes and promises to get over three soldiers in the Castle itself. The arrangement was that these men were to be furnished with ladders of a peculiar construction suited to the purpose, which, at a certain hour of the night, they were to lower down the Castle rock on the north side—the side looking on the Princes Street of our day. By these ladders the assailants were quietly to ascend, and then overpower the little garrison, and possess themselves of the Castle. When the stroke had been done, they were to fire three cannon, and men stationed on the opposite coast of Fife were thereupon to light a beacon; and the flash of that light would be the signal for other beacons from hill to hill to bear the news to Mar; as the lights along the Argive hills carried the tale of Troy's fall to Argos. The plan was an utter failure. It broke down in two places. One of the conspirators told his brother; the brother told his wife; the lady took alarm, and sent an anonymous letter disclosing the whole plot to the Lord Justice-Clerk. Yet even then, had the conspirators been in time, their plan might have succeeded; for the anony-

mous letter did not reach its destination till an hour after the time appointed to make the attempt on the Castle. But the conspirators were not punctual. Some of them were in a tavern in Edinburgh, drinking to the success of their enterprise. Every one in the neighbourhood seems to have known what their enterprise was, to have had some sympathy with it, to have talked freely about it. Eighteen of these heroes kept up their conviviality in the tavern till long after the appointed time. The hostess of the place was heard to say that they were powdering their hair to go to the attack on the Castle. "A strange sort of powder," Lord Stanhope remarks, "to provide on such an occasion." Lord Stanhope evidently takes the hostess's words in a literal sense, and believes that the lady really meant to say that the jovial conspirators were actually powdering their locks as if for a ball. We may assume that the hostess spoke as Hamlet did, "tropically." Whether she did or not—whether they were really adorning their locks, or simply draining the flagon—the result was all the same. They came too late; the plot was discovered; the sympathising soldiers from the Castle were already under arrest. The conspirators had to disperse and fly; few of them were arrested; their neighbours were only too willing to help them to escape. It cannot be doubted that there was sympathy enough in Edinburgh to have made their plan the beginning of a complete success—if it had only itself been allowed to succeed. But the disclosure to the lady, and the powder for the hair, brought all to nothing. The whole story might almost be said to be an allegorical illustration of the fortunes of the Stuarts. The pint and the petticoat always came in the way of a success to that cause.

When James reached Gravelines, he hurried on to St. Germain. There, the next morning, Bolingbroke came to see him. Bolingbroke, to do him justice, had done all in his power to dissuade James from making his fatal expedition at such a time, and under such untoward circumstances. He had shown judgment, prudence, and, in the true sense, courage. He had shown himself a statesman. He might very well have met James in the mood and with the

remonstrances of the counsellors who, after the event, are able to say, "I told you so." But Bolingbroke appears to have had more discretion and more manliness. He advised James to withdraw once again from the dominions of the King, and take refuge in Lorraine. Bolingbroke knew well, by this time, that there was not the slightest chance of any open assistance from the French Court; and even that the French Court would be only too ready to throw James over, and sacrifice him, if, by doing so, they could strengthen the bonds of good feeling between France and England. James professed to take Bolingbroke's counsel in very friendly fashion, and parted from Bolingbroke with many expressions of confidence and affection. Yet it is certain that at this time he had made up his mind not to see Bolingbroke any more. He went for a time to a house near Versailles, a kind of headquarters of intriguing political women, and thence immediately despatched a letter to Bolingbroke, relieving him of all his duties as Secretary of State. Bolingbroke affects to have taken his dismissal very composedly, but it cannot be doubted that his heart burnt within him at what he, doubtless, believed to be the ingratitude of the prince for whom he had done and sacrificed so much. For Bolingbroke had that unlucky gift of fancy which enables a man to see himself, and his own doings, and his own merits, in whatever light is most gratifying to his personal vanity. He had, in truth, never risked or sacrificed anything for the sake of James, or the Stuart cause. He never had the least idea of risking or sacrificing anything for that cause, or for any other. It was only when his fortunes in England became desperate, when impeachment, and, as he believed a scaffold, threatened him, when he had no apparent alternative left but to join the Pretender or stay at home and lose all—it was only then that he took any decided step as an adherent of the cause of the Stuarts. We cannot doubt that James Stuart knew to the full the part that Bolingbroke had played. He knew that he owed Bolingbroke no favour, and that he could have no confidence in him. Still it remains to the present hour a mystery why James should then, and in that manner, have got rid of Bolingbroke for ever. Bolingbroke



himself does not appear to have known the cause of his dismissal. It may be that James had grown tired of the whole fruitless struggle, and was glad to get rid of a minister whose restless energy and genius would always have kept political intrigue alive, and political enterprises going. Or it may be that just then there had fallen into James's hands some new and recent evidences of Bolingbroke's willingness to treat, on occasion, with either side. However this may be, James made up his mind to dismiss his great follower, and Bolingbroke at once made up his mind to endeavour to ingratiate himself into the favour of the House of Hanover, and to secure his restoration to London society. Almost at the very moment of his dismissal he made application to some of his friends in London to endeavour to obtain for him a permission to return.

We do not absolutely say a farewell to Bolingbroke now and here, as he stands dismissed from the service of the Stuarts and disqualified for the service of the Hanoverians. Nearly forty years of life were yet before him ; but his work as a statesman was done. Never again had his genius a chance of shining in the service of a throne. The master-politician of the age was out of employment for ever. We do not know if history anywhere supplies such another example of a great political career snapped off so suddenly at its midst, hardly even at its midst, and never put together again. Bolingbroke reappeared again and again in England. He even took more than once a certain kind of part in politics ; that is, in pamphleteering ; he tried to be the inspiration and the guiding star of Pulteney and other rising men who had come, for one reason or another, to detest Walpole. But even these soon began to find Bolingbroke rather more of a hindrance than a help, and were glad to shake him off and be rid of him. He becomes everything by turns : plays at cool philosophy and philosophic retreat ; is always assuring the world in tones of highly suspicious eagerness that he is done for ever with it and its works and pomps ; and he is always yearning and striving to get back to the works and pomps again. He plays at farming, actually puts on countrified manners, and dines ostentatiously off homely farmer-like fare, to the amusement of some of his friends.

He undertakes to settle the whole question of religion, of this world and the next, including the entire code of human ethics ; and at the same time he is very fond of expatiating to young men concerning the most effective ways for the seduction of women, the course to be followed with a lady of quality, the different course in dealing with an actress, the policy of a long siege, and the policy of an attack by storm. He marries again and gets money with his wife, a French *marquise*, once beautiful, somewhat older than himself, and seems to be fond of her and happy with her, and discourses to her, as to others, about the variety of his successful amours. Through long long years his shadow, his ghost—for in the political sense it is nothing else—keeps revisiting the glimpses of the moon in England. For all the influence he is destined to have on the realities of political life he might as well be already lying in that tomb in the old church on the edge of the Thames at Battersea, where his strangely brilliant, strangely blighted career is to come to an end at last.

## CHAPTER VIII

### AFTER THE REBELLION

ALL this time the Jacobite demonstrations were still going on in London, and in various parts of England, with as much energy as ever. Green boughs and oak apples were worn, and even flaunted about the streets, by groups of persons on May 29, the anniversary of Charles the Second's restoration. We read of the riots in London, of Whigs of the "Loyal Society" going about with little warming-pans as emblems of their hostility to the Stuart cause, and being met by other mobs wearing white roses as badges of the Stuart cause. There was a continual battle of pamphleteers and of ballad writers. "High Church and Ormond!" were shouted for and sung on one side of the political field, and the "Pope and Perkin," that is to say, James Stuart, were as liberally denounced on the other. The scandals

about King George's mistresses were freely alluded to in the Jacobite songs. The public of all parties seem to have very cordially detested the ill-favoured ladies whom George had brought over from Hanover. The coarsest and grossest abuse was poured forth in ballads and in pamphlets against the King's favourites and courtiers, and was sung and shouted day and night in the public streets.

Then, and for long after, these public streets were battle grounds on which Whigs and Tories, Hanoverians and Jacobites, fought out their quarrel. Men carried turnips in their hats in mockery of the German Elector, who had threatened to make St. James's Park a turnip field, and were prepared to fight lustily for their bucolic emblem. Women fanned the strife, wore white roses for the King over the water, or sweet-william in compliment to the "immortal memory" of William of Nassau. Sometimes even women were roughly treated. On one occasion we read of a serving-girl, who had made known the hiding-place of a Jacobite, being attacked and nearly murdered by a Jacobite mob, and rescued by some Whig gentlemen. On another occasion, a Whig gentleman, seeing a young lady in the street with a white rose in her bosom, jumped from his coach, tore out the disloyal blossom, lashed the young lady with his whip, and handed her over to a gang of Whigs, who would have stripped and scourged her but for the timely appearance of some Jacobite gentry, by whom she was carried home in safety. The "Flying Post" warns all "he-Jacobites" and "she-Jacobites" that if they are not careful they will meet with more severe treatment than hitherto, and then alludes to some pretty severe treatment the poor "she-Jacobites" had already received.

To do the King and his family justice, they behaved with courage and composure through this long season of popular excitement. They went everywhere as they pleased, braving the dangers that certainly existed. Once a man named Moor spat in the face of the Princess of Wales as she was going through the streets, and he was scourged till he cried "God bless King George!" In 1718 a youth named Sheppard was hanged for planning King George's death. This led a Hanoverian fanatic named Bowes to



suggest to the Ministry that in return he should go to Italy and kill King James. His proffer of political retaliation only resulted in his being shut up as a madman. At last the temper of the times and the frequent threats of assassination compelled the King to take more care of himself. Though he walked in Kensington Gardens every day, the gardens were first searched, and then carefully watched by soldiers.

When the rebellion was over the Government found they had a large number of prisoners on their hands, many of them of high rank. Several officers taken on the field had already been treated as deserters and shot, after a trial by drum-head court-martial. Some of the prisoners of higher rank were brought into London in a manner like that of captives dragged along in an old Roman triumph, or like that of actual convicts taken to Tyburn. They were marched in procession from Highgate through London, each man sitting on a horse, having his arms tied with cords behind his back, the horses led by soldiers, with a military escort drumming and firing a march of triumph. The men of noble rank were confined in the Tower; others, many of them men of position, such as Mr. Thomas Forster, a Northumberland gentleman, and member for his county, were thrust into Newgate, whose horrors have been so well described in Scott's "Rob Roy." The Rev. Robert Patten, who had been a conspicuous Jacobite, played a Titus Oates part in betraying his companions, and his name figures for King's evidence incessantly in the political trials. When he tired of treachery he retired to the obscurity of his parish of Allendale, in Northumberland, and gave the world his history of the rebellion in which he had played so base a part.

Amongst the chief prisoners were Lord Widdrington, the Earl of Nithisdale, the Earl of Wintoun, the Earl of Carnwath, the Earl of Derwentwater, Viscount Kenmure, and Lord Nairn. These noblemen were impeached before the House of Lords, and all, except Lord Wintoun, pleaded guilty, and prayed for the mercy of the King. Every effort was made to obtain a pardon for some of the condemned noblemen. Women of rank and beauty implored the King's mercy. Audacious attempts were made to bribe the Ministers. Some eminent members of the Whig party in

the House of Commons spoke up manfully and courageously in favour of a policy of mercy. It is something pleasant to recollect that Sir Richard Steele, who had got into Parliament again, was conspicuous amongst these. In the House of Lords the friends of the condemned men succeeded in carrying, despite the strong resistance of the Government, a motion for an address to the King, beseeching him to extend mercy to the noblemen in prison. Walpole himself had spoken very harshly in the House of Commons, and condemned in unmeasured terms those of his party—the Whig party—who could be so unworthy as, without blushing, to open their mouths in favour of rebels and parricides, and he had carried an adjournment of the House of Commons from the 22nd of February to the 1st of March, in order to prevent any further petitions in favour of the rebel lords from being presented before the day fixed for their execution. One of these petitions, it is worth while recollecting, was presented by the kindly hand and supported by the manly voice of Sir Richard Steele. The Ministers returned a merely formal answer on the King's behalf to the address, but they thought it wise to recommend a respite to be given to Lord Nairn, the Earl of Carnwath, and Lord Widdrington; and in order to get rid of any further appeals for mercy, they resolved that the execution of Lord Nithisdale, Lord Derwentwater, and Lord Kenmure should take place the very next day. Lord Nithisdale, however, was lucky enough to make his escape, somewhat after the fashion in which Lavalette, at a much later date, contrived to get out of prison, by the courage, devotion, and ingenuity of his wife. It is a curious fact that most of the contemporaries of Nithisdale who tell the story of his escape have represented his mother, and not his wife, as the woman who took his place in prison, and to whose energy and adroitness he owed his life. Smollett is one of those who give this version as if there were no doubt about it. Lord Stanhope, in the first edition of his "History of England, from the Peace of Utrecht to the Peace of Versailles," accepted the story on authorities which seemed so trustworthy. Lord Stanhope knew that many modern writers had described the escape as being effected by Lord Nithisdale's wife, but

he assumed that "the name of the wife was substituted in later tradition as being more romantic." A letter from Lady Nithisdale herself, written to her sister, settles the whole question, and of course Lord Stanhope immediately adopted this genuine version. Lady Nithisdale tells how at first she endeavoured to present a petition to the King. The first day she heard that the King was to go to the drawing-room she dressed herself in black, as if in mourning, and had a lady to accompany her, because she did not know the King personally, and might have mistaken some other man for him. This lady and another came with her, and the three remained in the room between the King's apartments and the drawing-room. When George was passing through "I threw myself at his feet, and told him in French that I was the unfortunate Countess of Nithisdale. . . . Perceiving that he wanted to go off without receiving my petition, I caught hold of the skirt of his coat that he might stop and hear me. He endeavoured to escape out of my hands, but I kept such strong hold that he dragged me upon my knees from the middle of the room to the very door of the drawing-room." One of the attendants of the King caught the unfortunate lady round the waist, while another dragged the King's coat skirt out of her hands. "The petition, which I had endeavoured to thrust into his pocket, fell down in the scuffle, and I almost fainted away through grief and disappointment." Seldom, perhaps, in the history of royalty, is there a description of so ungracious, unkingly, and even brutal reception of a petition presented by a distracted wife praying for a pardon to her husband.

Then Lady Nithisdale determined to effect her husband's escape. She communicated her design to a Mrs. Mills, and took another lady with her also. This lady was of tall and slender make, and she carried under her own riding-hood one that Lady Nithisdale had prepared for Mrs. Mills, as Mrs. Mills was to lend hers to Lord Nithisdale, so that in going out he might be taken for her. Mrs. Mills was also "not only of the same height, but nearly of the same size as my lord." On their arrival at the Tower, Mrs. Morgan was allowed to go in with Lady Nithisdale. Only one at a



time could be introduced by the lady. She left the riding-hood and other things behind her. Then Lady Nithisdale went downstairs to meet Mrs. Mills, who held her handkerchief to her face, "as was very natural for a woman to do when she was going to bid her last farewell to a friend on the eve of his execution. I had indeed desired her to do it, that my lord might go out in the same manner." Mrs. Mills's eyebrows were a light colour, and Lord Nithisdale's were dark and thick. "So," says Lady Nithisdale, "I had prepared some paint of the colour of hers to disguise his with. I also bought an artificial headdress of the same colour as hers, and I painted his face with white, and his cheeks with rouge to hide his long beard, which he had not time to shave. All this provision I had before left in the Tower. The poor guards, whom my slight liberality the day before had endeared me to, let me go quietly with my company, and were not so strictly on the watch as they usually had been, and the more so as they were persuaded, from what I had told them the day before, that the prisoners would obtain their pardon." Then Mrs. Mills was taken into the room with Lord Nithisdale, and rather ostentatiously led by Lady Nithisdale past several sentinels, and through a group of soldiers, and of the guards' wives and daughters. When she got into Lord Nithisdale's presence she took off her riding-hood, and put on that which Mrs. Morgan had brought for her. Then Lady Nithisdale dismissed her, and took care that she should not go out weeping as she had come in, in order, of course, that Lord Nithisdale, when he went out, "might the better pass for the lady who came in crying and afflicted. When Mrs. Mills was gone, Lady Nithisdale dressed up her husband "in all my petticoats excepting one." Then she found that it was growing dark, and was afraid that the light of the candles might betray her. She therefore went out, leading the disguised nobleman by the hand, he holding his handkerchief pressed to his eyes, as Mrs. Mills had done when she came in. The guards opened the doors, and Lady Nithisdale went downstairs with him. "As soon as he had cleared the door I made him walk before me for fear the sentinels should take notice of his walk." Some friends received Lord Nithisdale, and

conducted him to a place of security. Lady Nithisdale went back to her husband's prison, and "When I was in the room I talked to him as if he had been really present, and answered my own questions in my lord's voice as nearly as I could imitate it. I walked up and down as if we were conversing together, till I thought they had time enough to clear themselves of the guards. I then thought proper to make off also. I opened the door, and stood half in it, that those in the outward chamber might hear what I said, but held it so close that they could not look in. I bid my lord a formal farewell for that night," and she added some words about the petition for his pardon, and told him, 'I flattered myself that I should bring favourable news.'" Then she closed the door with some force behind her, and "I said to the servant as I passed by"—who was ignorant of the whole transaction—"that he need not carry any candles to his master till my lord sent for him, as he desired to finish some prayers first. I went downstairs and called a coach, as there were several on the stand. I drove home to my lodgings." Soon after Lady Nithisdale was taken to the place of security where her husband was remaining. They took refuge at the Venetian ambassador's two or three days after. Lord Nithisdale put on a livery, and went in the retinue of the ambassador to Dover. The ambassador, it should be said, knew nothing about the matter, but his coach and six went to Dover to meet his brother; and it was one of the servants of the embassy who acted in combination with Lord and Lady Nithisdale. A small vessel was hired at Dover, and Lord Nithisdale escaped to Calais, where his wife shortly after joined him. It is said by nearly all contemporary writers that King George, when he heard of the escape, took it very good-humouredly, and even expressed entire satisfaction with it. Lady Nithisdale does not seem to have believed this story of George's generosity. The statement made to her was that "when the news was brought to the King he flew into an excess of passion, and said he was betrayed, for it could not have been done without some confederacy. He instantly despatched two persons to the Tower to see that the other prisoners were well secured."

Lord Derwentwater and Lord Kenmure were executed on Tower Hill on the 24th February. The young and gallant Derwentwater declared on the scaffold that he withdrew his plea of guilty, and that he acknowledged no one but James Stuart as his King. Kenmure, too, protested his repentance at having, even formally, pleaded guilty, and declared that he died with a prayer for James Stuart. Lord Wintoun was not tried until the next month. He was a poor and feeble creature, hardly sound in his mind. "Not perfect in his intellectuals," a writer in a journal of the day observed of him. He was found guilty, but afterwards succeeded in making his escape from the Tower. Like Lord Nithisdale, he made his way to the Continent; and, like Lord Nithisdale, he died long after at Rome.

Humbler Jacobites could escape too. Forster escaped from Newgate, through the aid of a clever servant, and got off to France, while the angry Whigs hinted at connivance on the part of persons in high places. The redoubted Brigadier Mackintosh, who figures in descriptions of the time as a "beetle-browed, grey eyed" man of sixty, speaking "broad Scotch," succeeded in escaping, together with his son and seven others, in a rush of prisoners from the Newgate press-yard. Mr. Charles Radcliffe had an even stranger escape; for one day, growing tired, as well he might, of prison life, he simply walked out of Newgate under the eyes of his gaolers in the easy disguise of a morning suit and a brown tye-wig. Once some Jacobite prisoners, who were being sent to the West Indian plantations, rose against the crew, seized the ship, steered it to France, and quietly settled down there. Later still some prisoners got out even more easily. Brigadier Mackintosh's brother was discharged from Newgate on his own prayer, and on showing that "he was very old, and altogether friendless."

Immediately after the execution of the rebel noblemen the Ministry set to work to take some steps which might render political intrigue and conspiracy less dangerous in the future. One idea which especially commended itself to the statesmen of that time was to make the laws more



rigorous against Roman Catholics. Law and popular feeling were already strongly set against the Catholics. On the death of Queen Anne, officers in the army, when informing their companies of the accession of the Elector of Hanover, carried their loyal and religious enthusiasm so far as to call upon any of their hearers who might be Catholics to fall forthwith out of the ranks. The writers who supported the Hanoverian succession, and were in the service of the Whig Ministry, were not ashamed to declare that the ceremony of the Paternoster would infallibly cure a stranger of the spleen, and that any man in his senses would find excellent comedy in the recital of an Ave Maria. "How common it is," says the writer of "The Patriot," "to find a wretch of this persuasion to be deluded to such a degree that he shall imagine himself engaged in the solemnity of devotion, while in reality he is exceeding the fopperies of a Jack-pudding!" So great was the distrust of Catholics, that it was often the practice to seize upon the horses of Catholic gentlemen in order to impede them in the risings which they were always supposed to be meditating. But the condition of the Catholics in England was not bad enough to content the Ministry. An Act was passed, in fact what would now be called "rushed," through Parliament, to "strengthen the Protestant interest in Great Britain," by making more severe "the laws now in being against Papists," and by providing a more effective and exemplary punishment for persons who, being Papists, should venture to enlist in the service of his Majesty.

The spirit of political freedom, as we now understand it, had not yet even begun to glimmer upon the counsels of statesmen. The idea had not yet arisen in the minds of Englishmen—even of men as able as Walpole—that liberty meant anything more than liberty for the expression of one's own opinions, and for the carrying into action of one's own policy. Those who were in power immediately made it their business to strengthen their own hands, and to prevent, as far as possible, the growth of opinions, the expression of ideas, unfavourable to themselves. Yet at such a time there were not wanting advocates of the

Administration to write that it was "indeed the peculiar happiness and glory of an Englishman that he must first quit these kingdoms before he can experimentally know the want of public liberty." Most people, even still, read history by the light of ideas which prevailed up to the close of George the First's reign. We are all ready enough to admit that in our time it would not be a free system which suppressed or prevented the expression of other men's opinions, or which attached any manner of penal consequence to the profession of one creed or the adhesion to one party. But most of us are, nevertheless, ready enough to describe one period of English history, the reign perhaps of one Sovereign, as a period of religious liberty, and another season, or reign, as a time when liberty was suppressed. Some Englishmen talk with enthusiasm of the spirit of Elizabeth's reign, or the spirit of the reign of William the Third, and condemn, in unmeasured terms, the spirit which influenced James the Second, and which would no doubt have influenced James the Second's son, if he had come to the throne. But any one who will put aside for the moment his own particular opinions will see that in both cases the guiding principle was exactly the same. Never were there greater acts of political and religious intolerance committed than during the reign of Elizabeth and during the reign of William the Third. The truth is that the modern idea of constitutional and political liberty did not exist among English statesmen, even so recently as the reign of William the Third. At the period with which we are now dealing it would not have occurred to any statesman that there could be a wiser course to take than to follow up the suppression of the insurrection of 1715 by making more stringent than ever the laws already in existence against the religion to which most of the rebels belonged.

The Government made another change of a different kind, and for which there was better political justification. They passed a measure altering the period of the duration of Parliaments. At this time the limit of the existence of a Parliament was three years. An Act was passed in 1641

directing that Parliament should meet once at least in every three years. This Act was repealed in 1664. Another, and a different kind of Triennial Parliament Bill, passed in 1694. This Act declared that no Parliament should last for a longer period than three years. But the system of short Parliaments had not apparently been found to work with much satisfaction. The impression that a House of Commons with so limited a period of life before it would be more anxious to conciliate the confidence and respect of the constituencies had not been justified in practice. Indeed, the constituencies themselves at that time were not sufficiently awake to the meaning and the value of parliamentary representation to think of keeping any effective control over those whom they sent to speak for them in Parliament. Bribery and corruption were as rife and as extravagant under the triennial system as ever they had been before, or as ever they were since. But no doubt the immediate object of repealing the Triennial Bill was to obtain a better chance for the new condition of things by giving it a certain time to work in security. If the new dynasty was to have any chance of success at all, it was necessary that Ministers should not have to come almost immediately before the country again.

Shippen in the Commons and Atterbury in the Lords were among the most strenuous opponents of the new measure. Both staunch Jacobites, they had everything to gain just then by frequent appeals to the country. Shippen urged that it was unconstitutional in a Parliament elected for three years to elect itself for seven years without an appeal to the constituencies. Steele defended the Bill on the ground that all the mischiefs which could be brought under the Septennial Act could be perpetrated under the Triennial, but that the good which might be compassed under the Septennial could not be hoped for under the Triennial. Not a few persons in both Houses seemed to be of one mind with the bewildered Bishop of London, who declared that he did not know which way to vote, for "he was confounded between dangers and inconveniences on one side and destruction on the other." It is not out



of place to mention here that when a Bill was unsuccessfully brought in nearly twenty years after for the Repeal of the Septennial Act, many of those who had voted in favour of Parliaments of seven years in 1716 voted the other way, while opponents in 1716 were turned into allies in 1734.

The system of short Parliaments has ardent admirers in our own day. "Annual Parliaments" formed one of the points of the People's Charter. Many who would not accept the Chartist idea of annual Parliaments would still regard as one of the articles of the true creed of Liberalism the principle of the triennial Parliament. But even if that creed were true in the politics of the present day, it would not have been true in the early days of King George. One of the great constitutional changes which the times were then making, and which Walpole welcomed and helped to carry out, was the change which gave to the House of Commons the real ruling power in the Constitution. No representative chamber could then have held its own against the House of Lords, or the Court, or the Court and the House of Lords combined, if it had been subject to the necessity of frequent re-elections. Short Parliaments have even in our own days been made in Europe the most effective weapons of despotic power. No test more trying can be found for a party of men sincerely anxious to maintain constitutional rights at a season of danger than to subject them to frequent and close electoral struggles. Much more important in the historical and constitutional sense was it at the opening of King George's reign that the House of Commons should be strengthened than that any particular party should have unlimited opportunities of trying its chances at a general election. It mattered little, when once the position of the representative body had been made secure, whether George or James sat on the throne. With the representative body an inconsiderable factor in the State system, Brunswick would soon have been as unconstitutional as Stuart.

One of the last acts of the life of Lord Somers was to express to Lord Townshend his approval of the principle of the Septennial Bill. He did not live to see it actually

passed into law. He was but sixty-six years old at the time of his death. Disease and not age had weakened his fine intellect, and had kept him for many years from playing any important part in the affairs of the State. The day when Somers died was the very day when the Septennial Bill passed its third reading in the House of Commons. It had come down from the House of Lords, and had to go back to that House, in consequence of some alterations made in the Commons. Somers lived just long enough to be assured of its safety. Born in 1650, the son of a Worcester attorney, he had won for himself the proudest honours of the law, and had written his name high up in the roll of English statesmen. Steele wrote of him that he was "as much admired for his universal knowledge of men and things as for his eloquence, courage, and integrity in the exerting of such extraordinary talents." "The Spectator," in dedicating its earliest papers to him, spoke of him as one who brought into the service of his Sovereign the arts and policies of ancient Greece and Rome, and praised him for a certain dignity in himself which made him appear as great in private life as in the most important offices he had borne. It was in allusion to Somers, indeed, that Swift said Bolingbroke wanted for success "a small infusion of the alderman." This was a sneer at Somers, as well as a sort of rebuke to Bolingbroke. If the "small infusion of the alderman" was another term for order and method in public business, then it may be freely admitted by his greatest admirers that Somers had more of the alderman in his nature than Bolingbroke. Perhaps the only thing, except great capacity, which he had in common with Bolingbroke was an ungoverned admiration of the charms of women. His fame was first established by the ability with which he conducted his part of the defence of the seven bishops in James the Second's reign. His consistent devotion to the Whig party, and his just and almost prescient appreciation of the true principles of that party, set him in sharp contrast to other statesmen of the time—to men like Marlborough, and Shrewsbury, and Bolingbroke. His is a noble figure, even in its decay, and the historian of such a time parts from him with regret, feeling

that the average of public manhood and virtue is lowered when Somers is gone.

While Jacobites were lingering in prison and dying on Tower Hill, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu was writing from abroad imperishable letters to her friends. We may turn away from politics for a moment to observe her and her career. Mr. Wortley Montagu had been appointed Ambassador to Constantinople, and had set out for his post, accompanied by the witty and beautiful wife for whom he cared so little. Ever since he first met her and presented her with a copy of "Quintus Curtius," in honour of her Latinity, and some original verses of his own, in earnest of his admiration, he had been an exacting, impatient lover. After his marriage he seems to have grown absolutely indifferent to her, leaving her alone for months together while he remained in town, and pleading as his excuse his Parliamentary duties. She, who, on the contrary, had made no unreasonable display of affection for the lover, appears to have become deeply attached to the husband, and to have been bitterly pained by his careless indifference, an indifference which at last, and it would appear most unwillingly, she learned to return. When this life had been lived for a year or two Queen Anne died, and with Walpole's accession to power Mr. Wortley got office, and brought his beautiful wife up from Yorkshire to be the wonder and admiration of the English Court and the Hanoverian monarch. For two bright years Lady Mary shone like a star in the brilliant constellation of women, of wits, of politicians, and men of letters, who thronged St. James's Palace and peopled St. James's parish. Then came the Constantinople embassy. Lady Mary had always a longing for foreign travel, and now that her desires were gratified she enjoyed herself with all the delight of a child and all the intelligence of a gifted woman. Travel was a rare pleasure for women then. A young English gentleman made the grand tour, and brought back, if he were foolish, nothing better than a few receipts for strange dishes, and some newer notions of vice than he had set out with; if he were wise he became "possessed of the tongues," and bore home spoils of voyage in the shape of



Titians, and Correggios, and Raphaels—genuine or the reverse—to stock a picture gallery in the family mansion. But women very seldom travelled much in those days. Certainly no man or woman could then write of travels as Mary Wortley Montagu could, and did. We may well imagine the delight with which Mistress Skerret, and Lady Rich, and the Countess of Bristol, languid Lord Hervey's mother, and adoring Mr. Pope received these marvellous letters, which were destined to rank with the epistles of the younger Pliny and of Madame de Sévigné. Mr. Pope—whose translation of the "Odyssey" had not yet made its appearance—may well have thought that Ulysses himself had not seen men and cities to greater advantage than the beautiful wanderer whom he was destined first to love and then to hate. As we read her letters we seem to live with her in the great gay gloomy life of Vienna, to hear once more the foolish squabbles of Ratisbon society as to who should and should not be styled Excellency, and to smile at the loyal crowds of English thronging the wretched inns of Hanover. But the fidelity of her descriptions may best be judged from her accounts of life in Constantinople. The Vienna of to-day is very different from the ill-built, high-storeyed city of Maria Theresa; but the condition of Constantinople has scarcely changed with the century and a half that has gone by since Lady Mary was English Ambadress there. She seems, indeed, to have seen the heads upon the famous monument of bronze twisted serpents in the Hippodrome; and perhaps she did, for Spon and Wheler's sketch of it in 1675 gives it with the triple heads still perfect, though these serpent heads, and all traces of them, have long since disappeared. In Constantinople Lady Mary first became acquainted with that principle of inoculation for the small-pox which she so enthusiastically advocated, which she introduced into England in spite of so much hostility and disfavour, and which, now accepted by almost all the civilised world, is still wrangled fiercely over in England.

Perhaps we may anticipate by some half-century to tell of Lady Mary's further career. She came back to London again, and shone as brilliantly as before, and was made

love to by Pope, and laughed at her lover, and was savagely scourged by him in return with whips of stinging and shameful satire. One can understand better the story of the daughters of Lycambes hanging themselves under the pain of the iambics of Archilochus when one reads the merciless cruelty with which the great English satirist treated the woman he had loved. When Lady Mary grew old she went away abroad to live, without any opposition on her husband's part. They parted with mutual indifference and mutual esteem. She lived for many years in Italy, chiefly in Venice. Then she came back to London for a short time to live in lodgings off Hanover Square, and be the curiosity of the town; and then she died. Lady Mary always had a dread of growing old; and she grew old and ill-favoured, as Horace Walpole was spiteful enough to put on record. When Pope was laughed at by the beauty, he might have said to her in the words that Clarendon used to the fair Castlemaine, "Woman, you will grow old," and have felt that in those words he had almost repaid the bitterness of her scorn. Horace Walpole indeed avenged the offended poet, long dead and famous, when he wrote thus of Lady Mary: "Her dress, her avarice, and her impudence must amaze any one that never heard her name. She wears a foul mob that does not cover her greasy black locks, that hang loose, never combed or curled; an old magazine blue wrapper, that gapes open and discovers a canvas petticoat. Her face . . . partly covered . . . with white paint, which for cheapness she has bought so coarse that you would not use it to wash a chimney." Such is one of the latest portraits of the woman who had been a poet's idol and the cherished beauty of a Court. Lady Mary, who had outlived her husband, left an exemplary daughter, who married Lord Bute, and a most unexemplary son, to whom she bequeathed one guinea, and who spent the greater part of his life drifting about the East, and acquiring all kinds of strange and useless knowledge.

## CHAPTER IX

## “MALICE DOMESTIC—FOREIGN LEVY”

SOME of the earlier letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu are written from Hanover, and give a lively description of the crowded state of that capital in the autumn of 1716. Hanover was crowded in this unusual way because King George was there at the time, and his presence was the occasion for a great gathering of diplomatic functionaries and statesmen and politicians of all orders. Some had political missions, open and avowed; some had missions of still greater political importance, which, however, were not formally avowed, and were for the most part conducted in secret. A turning-point had been reached in the affairs of Europe, and the King's visit to Hanover was an appropriate occasion for the preliminary steps to certain new arrangements that had become inevitable. Even before the King's visit to his dear Hanover the English Government had been paving the way for some of these new combinations and alliances. The very day after the royal coronation Stanhope had gone on a mission to Vienna which had something to do with the arrangements subsequently made.

It would be paying too high a compliment to the patriotic energy of the King to suppose that he had gone to Hanover for the sake of promoting arrangements calculated to be of advantage to England. Let us do justice to George's sincerity: he never pretended to any particular concern for English interests when they were not bound up with the interests of Hanover. But he had long been pining for a sight of Hanover. He had now been away from his beloved Herrenhausen for nearly two years, and he was consumed by an unconquerable home-sickness. That his absence might be inconvenient to his newly acquired country or to his Ministers had no weight in his mind to counterbalance the desire of walking once more in the prim Herrenhausen avenues and looking over



the level Hanoverian fields, or treading the corridors of the old Schloss, where the ancestral Guelfs had revelled, and where the ghost of Königsmark might well be supposed to wander. The Act for restraining the King from going out of the kingdom was repealed in May 1716. The Prince of Wales was to be appointed temporary ruler in the King's absence. This appointment was the only obstacle that George admitted to his journey. In the Hanover family, father had hated son, and son father, with traditional persistence. George was animated by the sourest jealousy of his son. One reason, if there had been no other, for this animosity was that the young man was well known to have some sympathy for the sufferings of his mother, the unhappy Sophia Dorothea, imprisoned in Ahlden, and he had at least once made an unsuccessful effort to see her. Since George came to England he persisted in regarding his eldest son as a rival for popular favour, and this feeling was naturally kept alive by the enemies of the House of Hanover. To this detested son George had now to entrust the care of his kingdom, or else abandon his visit to dear Herrenhausen. The struggle was severe, but patriotic affection triumphed over paternal hatred. The Prince was named not indeed Regent, but Guardian of the Realm and Lieutenant, with as many restrictions upon his authority as the King was able or was allowed to impose, and on July 9 George set out for Hanover, accompanied by Secretary Stanhope. He was not long absent from England, however. On November 14 he came back again. Loyalists issued prints of the monarch waited upon by angels, and accompanied by flattering verses addressed to the "Presedent of y<sup>e</sup> Loyall Mug Houses." But the devotion of the mug-houses could not make George personally popular, or diminish the general dislike to his German ministers, his German mistresses, and the horde of hungry foreigners—the Hanoverian rats, as Squire Western would have called them—who came over with him to England, seeking for place and pension, or pension without place.

The Thames was frozen over in the winter of this year, 1716, and London made very merry over the event. The

ice was covered with booths for the sale of all sorts of wares, and with small coffee-houses and chop-houses. Wrestling rings were formed in one part; in another an ox was roasted whole. People played at push-pin, skated, or drove about on ice boats brave with flags. Coaches moved slowly up and down the highway of barges and wherries, and hawkers cried their wares lustily in the new field that winter had offered them. All the banks of the river—and especially such places as the Temple Gardens—were crowded with curious throngs surveying the animated and unusual scene.

During George's absence from England he and his Ministers had made some new and important arrangements in the policy of Europe. From this time forth—indeed, from the reign of Queen Anne—England was destined—doomed, perhaps—to have a regular part in the politics of the Continent. Before that time she had often been drawn into them, or had plunged enterprisingly or recklessly into them; but from the date of the accession of the House of Hanover England was as closely and constantly mixed up in the political affairs of the Continent as Austria or France. In the opening years of George's reign France, the Empire—Austria, that is to say, for the Holy Roman Empire had come to be merely Austria—and Spain were the important Continental Powers. Russia was only coming up; the genius of Peter the Great was beginning to make her way for her. Italy was as yet only a geographical expression—a place divided among minor kings and princes, who in politics sometimes bowed to the Pope's authority, and sometimes evaded or disregarded it. The power of Turkey was broken, never to be made strong again; the republic of Venice was already beginning to "sink like a seaweed into whence she rose." The position of Spain was peculiar. Spain had for a long time been depressed, and weak, and disregarded. For many years it was thought that she was going down with Turkey and Venice—that the star of her fate had declined for ever. Suddenly, however, she began to raise her head above the horizon again, and to threaten the peace of the Continent. The peace of the Continent could not now be threatened

without menace to the peace of England, for George's Hanoverian dominions were sure to be imperilled by European disturbance, and George would take good care that Hanover did not suffer while England had armies to move and money to spend. The English Government found it necessary to look out for allies.

France was under the rule of a remarkable man. Philip, Duke of Orleans and Regent of the kingdom, ought to have been a statesman of the Byzantine Empire. He was steeped to the lips in profligacy; he had no moral sense whatever, unless that which was supplied by the so-called code of honour. His intrigues, his carouses, his debaucheries, his hordes of mistresses, gave scandal even in that time of prodigal licence. But he had a cool head, a daring spirit, and an intellect capable of accepting new and original ideas. He must be called a statesman; and, despite the vulgarity of some of his vices, he has to be called a gentleman as well. He could be trusted: he would keep his word, once given. Other statesmen could treat with him, and not fear that he would break a promise or betray a confidence. How rare such qualities were at that day among the politicians of any country the readers of the annals of Queen Anne do not need to be told. The Regent's principal adviser at this time was a man quite as immoral, and also quite as able, as himself—the Abbé Dubois, afterwards Cardinal and Prime Minister. Dubois had a profound knowledge of foreign affairs, and he thoroughly understood the ways of men. He had fought his way from humble rank to a great position in Church and State. He had trained his every faculty—and all his faculties were well worth the training—to the business of statecraft and of diplomatic intrigue. It is somewhat curious to note that the three ablest politicians in Europe at that day were churchmen: Swift in England, Dubois in France, and Alberoni—of whom we shall presently have to speak—in Spain. The quick and unclouded intelligence of the Regent—unclouded despite his days and nights of debauchery—saw that the cause of the Stuarts was gone. While that cause had hope he was willing to give it a chance, and he would naturally have welcomed its success;



but he had taken good care during its late and vain effort not to embroil himself in any quarrel, or even any misunderstanding, with England on its account: and now that that poor struggle was over for the time, he believed that it would be for his interest to come to an understanding with King George.

The idea of such an understanding originated with the Regent himself. There has been some discussion among English historians as to the title of Townshend or of Stanhope to be considered its author. Whether Townshend or Stanhope first accepted the suggestion does not seem a matter of much consequence. It is clear that the overture was made by the Regent. While King George and his Minister Stanhope were in Hanover, the Regent sent Dubois, on various pretexts, to places where he might have an opportunity of coming to an understanding with both. Dubois had lived in England, and had made the personal acquaintance of Stanhope there. What could be more natural than that the Regent, who was a lover of art, should ask Dubois to visit the Hague, for the purpose of buying some books and pictures, about the time that the English Minister was known to be in the neighbourhood? And how could old acquaintances like Stanhope and Dubois, thus brought into close proximity, fail to take advantage of the opportunity, and to have many a quiet, informal meeting? What more natural than that Dubois should afterwards go to Hanover to visit his friend Stanhope there, and that he should live in Stanhope's house? The account which the lively Lady Mary Wortley Montagu gives of the manner in which Hanover was then crowded would of itself explain the necessity for Dubois availing himself of Stanhope's hospitality, and for Stanhope's offer of it. The Portuguese Ambassador, Lady Mary says, thought himself very happy to be the temporary possessor of "two wretched parlours in an inn." Dubois and Stanhope had many talks, and the result was an arrangement which could be accepted by the King and the Regent.

The foreign policy of the Whigs had for its object the maintenance of peace on the European Continent by a close observance of the conditions laid down in the Treaty

of Utrecht. The settlement made under that treaty was, however, very unsatisfactory to Spain. The new Spanish King, Philip of Anjou, had formally renounced his own rights of succession to the throne of France, and had given up the Italian provinces which formerly belonged to the Spanish Crown. But, as in most such instances at that time, an ambitious European sovereign had no sooner accepted conditions which appeared to him in any wise unsatisfactory, than he went to work to endeavour to set them aside, or get out of them somehow. Philip's whole mind was turned to the object of getting back again all that he had given up. This would not have seemed an easy task, even to a man of the stamp of Charles the Fifth. It would almost appear that any attempt in such a direction must bring Europe in arms against Spain. The Regent Duke of Orleans stood next in succession to the French throne, in consequence of Philip's renunciation of his rights by virtue of the Treaty of Utrecht. The Italian provinces which had once been Spain's were now handed over to Austria, and Austria would of course be resolute in their defence. King Philip was not the man to confront the difficulties of a situation of this kind by his own unaided powers of mind. He was very far indeed from being a Charles the Fifth. He was not even a Philip the Second. But he had for his Minister a man as richly endowed with statesmanship and courage as he himself was wanting in those qualities. Giulio Alberoni, an Italian, born at Piacenza in 1664, was at one time appointed agent of the Duke of Parma at the Court of Spain, and in this position acquired very soon the favour of Philip. Alberoni was of the most humble origin. His father was a gardener, and he himself a poor village priest. He rose, however, both in diplomacy and in the Church, having worked his way up to the favour of the Duke of Parma, to work still further on to the complete favour of Philip the Fifth. The first marked success in his upward career was made when he contrived to commend himself to the Duc de Vendôme, the greatest French commander of his day. The Duke of Parma had occasion to deal with Vendôme, and sent the Bishop of Parma to confer with him. The Duc de

Vendôme was a man who affected roughness and brutality of manners, and made it his pride to set all rules of decency at defiance. Peter the Great, Potemkin, Suwarrow, would have seemed men of ultra-refinement when compared with him. His manner of receiving the bishop was such that the bishop quitted his presence abruptly and without saying a word; and, returning to Parma, told his master that no consideration on earth should induce him ever to approach the brutal French soldier again. Alberoni was beginning to rise at this time. He offered to undertake the mission, feeling sure that not even Vendôme could disconcert him. He was entrusted with the task of renewing the negotiations, and he obtained admission to the presence of Vendôme. Every reader remembers the story in the "Arabian Nights" of that brother of the talkative barber who threw himself into the spirit of the rich Barmecide's humour, and by outdoing him in the practical joke secured for ever his favour and his friendship. Alberoni acted on this principle at his first meeting with Vendôme. He out-buffooned even Vendôme's buffoonery. The story will not bear minute explanation, but Alberoni soon satisfied Vendôme that he had to do with a man after his own heart—what Elizabethan writers would have called a "mad wag"—and Vendôme gave him his confidence.

Alberoni was made Prime Minister by Philip in 1715, and Cardinal by the Court of Rome shortly after. The ambition of Alberoni was in the first instance to recover to Spain her lost Italian provinces, and to raise Spain once more to the commanding position she had held when Charles the Fifth abdicated the crown. Alberoni's policy, indeed, was a mistake, as regarded the strength and the prosperity of Spain. Spain's Italian and Flemish provinces were of no manner of advantage to her. They were sources of weakness, because they constantly laid Spain open to an attack from any enemy, who had the advantage of being able to choose his battle-ground for himself so long as Spain had outlying provinces scattered over the Continent. Indeed, it is made clear, from the testimony of many observers, that Spain was rapidly recovering her domestic prosperity from the moment when she lost those provinces,



and when the continual strain to which they exposed her finances was stopped. At that epoch of Europe's political development, the idea had hardly occurred to any statesman that national greatness could come about in any other way than by the annexing or the recovery of territory. Alberoni intrigued against the Regent, and was particularly anxious to injure the Emperor. He was well inclined to enter into negotiations, and even into an alliance, with England. He lent his help, when first he took office, to bring to a satisfactory conclusion some arrangements for a commercial treaty between England and Spain. This treaty gave back to British subjects whatever advantages in trade they had enjoyed under the Austrian Kings of Spain, and contained what we should now call a most favoured nation clause, providing that no British subjects should be exposed to higher duties than were paid by Spaniards. Alberoni cautiously refrained from giving any encouragement to the Stuarts, and always professed to the British Minister the strongest esteem and friendship for King George. Stanhope himself had known Alberoni formerly in Spain, and had from the first formed a very high opinion of his abilities. He now opened a correspondence with the Cardinal, expressing a strong wish for a sincere and lasting friendship between England and Spain; and this correspondence was kept up for some time, in so friendly and confidential a manner, that very little was left for the regular accredited Minister from Spain at the Court of King George to do.

Alberoni, however, was somewhat too vain and impatient. He had brought over Sweden to his side, partly because he found Charles the Twelfth in a bad humour on account of the cession to Hanover of certain Swedish territories by the King of Denmark, who had clutched them while the warlike Charles was away in Turkey. The cession of these places brought Hanover to the sea, and they were of importance thus to Hanover and to England alike. George the Elector was in his petty way an ambitious Hanoverian prince, however little interest he had in English affairs. He had always been anxious to get possession of the districts of Bremen and Verden, which

had been handed over to Sweden at the Peace of Westphalia. Reckless enterprise had carried Charles the Twelfth—"Swedish Charles," with "a frame of adamant, a soul of fire," whom no dangers frightened, and no labours tired, the "unconquered lord of pleasure and of pain"—too far in the rush of his chivalrous madness. His vaulting ambition had overleaped itself, and fallen on the other side; and after his defeat at Pultowa, all his enemies, some of whom he had scared into inaction before, turned upon him as the nations of Europe turned upon Napoleon the First after Moscow. Charles had gone into Turkey and taken refuge there, and it seemed as if he had fallen never to rise again. In his absence the King of Denmark seized Schleswig-Holstein, Bremen, and Verden. At the close of 1714 Charles suddenly roused himself from depression, and appeared at the town of Stralsund, almost as much to the alarm of Europe as Napoleon had caused when he left Elba and landed on the southern shore of France. The King of Denmark shuddered at the prospect of a struggle with Charles, and in order to secure some part of his spoils he entered into a treaty with the Elector of Hanover, by virtue of which he handed over Bremen and Verden to George, on condition that George should pay him a handsome sum of money, and join him in resisting Sweden.

Nothing could be less justifiable, or indeed more nefarious, than these arrangements. They were discreditable to George the First, and they were disgraceful to the King of Denmark. Yet the general policy of that time seems to have approved of the whole transaction, and regarded it merely as a good stroke of business for Hanover and for England. Alberoni, having secured the help of Sweden, got together great forces both by sea and by land, and prepared for a reconquest of the lost Italian provinces. He occupied Sardinia, and made an attempt on Sicily. But this was going a little too far and too fast. Alberoni frightened the great States of Europe into activity against him. England, France, and Holland formed a triple alliance, the basis of which was that the House of Hanover should be guaranteed in England, and the House of Orleans in France, should the young King, Louis the

Fifteenth, die without issue. Not long after, the triple alliance was expanded into a quadruple alliance, the Emperor of Germany becoming one of its members. An English fleet appeared in the Straits of Messina, and a sea fight took place in which the Spaniards lost almost all their vessels. Alberoni tried to get up another fleet for the purpose of making a landing in Scotland under the Duke of Ormond, with a view to a great Jacobite rising. But the seas and skies seem always to have been fatal to Spanish projects against England, and the expedition under Ormond was as much of a failure as the far greater expedition under Alexander of Parma. The fleet was wrecked in the Bay of Biscay. The French were invading the northern provinces of Spain, and the King of Spain was compelled not only to get rid of Alberoni, but to renounce once more any claim to the French throne, and to abandon his attempts on Sardinia and Sicily. Another danger was removed from England by the death of Charles the Twelfth. "A petty fortress and a dubious hand" brought about the end of him who had, "like the wind's blast, never-resting, homeless," stormed so long across war-convulsed Europe, and "left that name at which the world grew pale to point a moral or adorn a tale." Charles the Twelfth had just entered into an alliance with Peter the Great for an enterprise to destroy the House of Hanover and restore the Stuarts, when the memorable bullet at the siege of Frederikshall in Norway brought his strange career to a close in December 1718. A junction between such men as Charles the Twelfth and Peter the Great might indeed have had matter in it. Peter was probably the greatest sovereign born to a throne in modern Europe. An alliance between Peter's profound sagacity and indomitable perseverance, and Charles's unbounded courage and military skill, might have been ominous for any cause against which it was aimed. The good fortune which from first to last seems on the whole to have attended the House of Hanover, and followed it even in spite of itself, was with it when the bullet from an unknown hand struck down Charles the Twelfth.

These international arrangements have for us now very



little real interest. They were entirely artificial and temporary. Nothing came of them that could long endure, or make any real change in the relations of the European States. They had hardly anything to do with the interests of the various peoples over whose heads and without whose knowledge or concern they were made. It was still firmly believed that two or three diplomatists, meeting in a half-clandestine way in a Minister's closet or a lady's drawing-room, could come to agreements which would bind down nations and rule political movements. The first upheaving of any genuine force, national or personal, in European life tore through all their meshes in a moment. Frederick the Great, soon after, is to compel Europe to reconstruct her scheme of political arrangements; later yet, the French Revolution is to clear the ground more thoroughly and violently still. The triple alliance, concocted by the Regent and Stanhope and Dubois, had not the slightest permanent effect on the general condition of Europe. It was a clever and an original idea of the Regent to think of bringing England and France, these old hereditary enemies, into a permanent alliance, and it was right of Stanhope to enter into the spirit of the enterprise; but the actual conditions of England and France did not allow of an abiding friendship. The national interest, as it was then understood, of the one State was in antagonism to the national interest of the other. Nor could France and England combined have kept down the growth of other European States then rising into importance and beginning to cast their shadows far in front of them. It seems only amusing to us now to read of King George's directions to his Minister—"To crush the Czar immediately, to secure his ships, and even to seize his person." The courageous and dull old King had not the faintest perception of the part which either the Czar or the Czar's country was destined to play in the history of Europe. At present we are all inclined, and with some reason, to think that French statesmen, as a rule, are wanting in a knowledge of foreign politics—in an appreciation of the relative proportions of one force and another in the affairs of Europe outside France. But in the days of George the First, French statesmen were much

more accomplished in the knowledge of foreign politics than the statesmen of England. There was not, probably, in George's Administration any man who had anything like the knowledge of the affairs of foreign countries which was possessed by Dubois. But it had not yet occurred to the mind of Dubois, or the Regent, or anybody else, that the relations of one State to another, or one people to another, are anything more than the arrangements which various sets of diplomatic agents think fit to make among themselves and to consign to the formality of a treaty.

The interest we have now in all these "understandings," engagements, and so-called alliances, is personal rather than national. So far as England is concerned, they led to a squabble and a split in George's Administration. It would hardly be worth while to go into a minute history of the quarrel between Townshend and Stanhope, Sunderland and Walpole. Sunderland, a man of great ability and ambition, had never been satisfied with the place he held in the King's Administration, and the disputes which sprang up out of the negotiations for the triple alliance gave him an opportunity of exerting his influence against some of his colleagues. Fresh occasion for intrigue, jealousy, and anger was given by the desire of the King to remain during the winter in Hanover, and his fear, on the other hand, that his son—the Prince who was at the head of affairs in his absence—was forming a party against him, and was caballing with some of the members of the Government. Sunderland acted on the King's narrow and petty fears. He distinctly accused Townshend and Walpole of a secret understanding with the Prince and the Duke of Argyll against the Sovereign's interests. The result of all this was that the King dismissed Lord Townshend, and that Walpole insisted on resigning office. The King, to do him justice, would gladly have kept Walpole in his service, but Walpole would not stay. It is clear that Walpole was glad of the opportunity of getting out of the Ministry. He professed to be deeply touched by the earnestness of the King's remonstrances. He was moved, it is stated, to tears. At all events, he got very successfully through the ceremony of tear-shedding. But, although he wept, he did

not soften. His purpose remained fixed. He went out of office, and, to all intents and purposes, passed straight-way into opposition. Stanhope became First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer.

For a long time it must have been apparent to every one that Walpole was the coming Minister. Walpole himself must have felt satisfied on the point; but he was probably well content to admit to himself that his time had not yet come. Walpole was not a great man. He wanted the moral qualities which are indispensable to greatness. He was almost as much wanting in them as Bolingbroke himself. But, if his genius was far less brilliant than that of Bolingbroke, he was amply furnished with patience and steadiness. He could wait. He did not devise half a dozen plans for one particular object, and fly from one to the other when the moment for action was approaching, and end by rejecting them all when the moment for action had arrived. He made up his mind to a certain course, and he held to it; if its chance did not come to-day, it might come to-morrow. He had no belief in men's sincerity—or women's either. There seems reason to believe that the famous saying ascribed to him, about every man having his price, was not used by him in that unlimited sense; that he only spoke of "these men"—of certain men—and said that every one of them had his price. But he always acted as if the description he gave of "these men" might safely be extended to all men. He had a coarse, licentious nature. He enjoyed the company of loose women. He loved obscene talk—not merely did he love it, but he indulged in and encouraged it for practical purposes of his own; he thought it useful at men's dinner parties, because it gave even the dullest man a subject on which he could find something to say. One could not call Walpole a patriot in the higher sense; he wanted altogether that fine fibre in his nature, that exalted, half-poetic feeling, that faculty of imagination which quicken practical and prosaic objects with the spirit of the ideal, and which are needed to make a man a patriot in the noblest meaning of the word. But he loved his country in his own heavy, practical, matter-of-fact sort of way, and that was



just the sort of way which, at the time, happened to be most useful to England. Let it be said, too, in justice to Walpole, that the most poetic and lyrical nature would have found little subject for enthusiasm in the England of Walpole's earlier political career. It was not exactly the age for a Philip Sidney, or for a Milton. England's home and foreign policy had for years been singularly ignoble. At home it had been a conflict of mean intrigues; abroad, a policy of selfish alliances and base compromises and surrenders. The splendid military genius of Marlborough only shone as it did as if to throw into more cruel light the infamy of the intrigues and plots to which it was often sacrificed. No man could be enthusiastic about Queen Anne or George the First. The statesmen who professed the utmost ardour for the Stuart cause were ready to sell it at a moment's notice, to secure their own personal position; most of those who grovelled before King George were known to have been in treaty, up to the last, with his rival. We may excuse Walpole if, under such conditions, he took a prosaic view of the state of things, and made his patriotism a very practical sort of service to his country. It was, as we have said, precisely the sort of service England just then stood most in need of. Walpole applied himself to secure for his country peace and retrenchment. He did not, indeed, maintain a sacred principle of peace: he had no sacred principle about anything. We shall see more lately that he did not scruple, for party reasons, to lend himself to a wanton and useless war, well knowing it was wanton and useless; but his general policy was one of peace, and so long as he had his own way there would have been no waste of England's resources on foreign battle-fields. He despised war and the trade of war in his heart. To him war showed only in its vulgar, practical, and repulsive features; the soldier was a man who got paid for the trade of killing. Walpole might be likened to a shrewd and sensible steward who is sincerely anxious to manage his master's estate with order and economy, and who, for that very reason, is willing to indulge his master's vices and to sanction his prodigalities to a certain extent, knowing that if he attempts to draw the purse-strings too closely an open

rupture will be the result, and then some steward will come in who has no taste for saving, and who will let everything go to rack and ruin. He was the first of the long line of English Ministers who professed to regard economy as one of the great objects of statesmanship. He established securely the principle that to make the two ends meet was one of the first duties of patriotism. He founded, if we may use such an expression, the dynasty of statesmen to which Pitt, and Peel, and Gladstone belong. The change in our constitutional ways which set up that new dynasty was of infinitely greater importance to England than the change which settled the Brunswicks in the place of the Stuarts.

## CHAPTER X

### HOME AFFAIRS

MEANWHILE the public seemed to have forgotten all about Lord Oxford. "Harley, the nation's great support," as Swift had called him, had been nearly two years in the Tower, and the nation did not seem to miss its great support, or to care anything about him. In May 1717, Lord Oxford sent a petition to the House of Lords, complaining of the hardship and injustice of this unaccountable delay in his impeachment, and the House of Lords began at last to put on an appearance of activity. The Commons, too, revived and enlarged their secret committee, of which it will be remembered that Walpole was the chairman. Times, however, had changed. Walpole was not in the Administration, and felt no anxiety to assist the Ministry in any way. He purposely absented himself from the sittings, and a new chairman had to be chosen. Probably Walpole had always known well enough that there was not evidence to sustain a charge of high treason against his former rival; perhaps now that the rival was down in the dust, never to rise again, he did not care to press for his punishment. At all events, he made it clear that he felt no interest in the

impeachment of Lord Oxford. The friends of the ruined Minister had recourse to an ingenious artifice. June 24, 1717, had been appointed for the opening of the proceedings. Westminster Hall, lately the scene of the impeachment of Somers, and soon to be the scene of the impeachment of Warren Hastings, was of course the place where Oxford had to come forward and meet his accusers. The King, the Prince and the Princess of Wales were seated in the Hall; most of the foreign Ambassadors and Ministers were spectators. The imposing formalities and artificial terrors of such a ceremonial were kept up. Lord Oxford had been brought from the Tower to Westminster by water. He was now led bareheaded up to the bar by the Deputy Lieutenant of the Tower, having the axe borne before him, its edge turned away from him as yet, symbolic of the doom that might await the prisoner, but to which he had not yet been declared responsible. When the reading of the articles of impeachment and other opening passages of the trial had been gone through, Lord Harcourt, Oxford's friend, interposed, and announced that he had a motion to make. In order to hear his motion, the Peers had to withdraw to their own house. There Lord Harcourt moved that the House should dispose of the two articles of impeachment for high treason, before going into any of the evidence to support the charges for high crimes and misdemeanours. The argument for this course of proceeding was plausible. If Oxford were convicted of high treason he would have to forfeit his life; and in such case, where would be the use of convicting him of a minor offence? The plan on which the Commons proposed to act, that of taking all the evidence in order of time, no matter to which charge it had reference, before coming to any conclusion, might, as Lord Harcourt put it, "draw the trial into prodigious length," and absolutely to no purpose. Should the accused be found guilty of high treason he must suffer death, and there would be an end of the whole business. Should he be acquitted of the graver charge, he might then be impeached on the lighter accusation; and what harm would have been done or time lost? The motion was carried by a majority of eighty-eight to fifty-six.



Now it is hardly possible to suppose that the Peers who voted in the majority did not know very well that the Commons would not, and could not, submit to have their mode of conducting an impeachment, which it was their business to manage, thus altered at the sudden dictation of the other chamber. The House of Commons was growing in importance every day; the House of Lords was proportionately losing its influence. The Commons determined that they would conduct the impeachment in their own way or not at all. Doubtless some of them, most of them, were glad to be well out of the whole affair. July 1 was fixed for the renewal of the proceedings. Some fruitless conferences between Lords and Commons wasted two days, and on the evening of July 3 the Lords sat in Westminster Hall, and invited by proclamation the accusers of Oxford to appear. No manager came forward to conduct the impeachment on the part of the Commons. The Peers sat for a quarter of an hour as if waiting for a prosecutor, well knowing that none was coming. A solemn farce was played. The Peers went back to their chamber, and there a motion was made acquitting "Robert, Earl of Oxford and Earl Mortimer," on the ground that no charge had been maintained against him. A crowd without hailed the adoption of the motion with cheers. Oxford was released from the Tower, and nothing more was ever heard of his impeachment. The Duke of Marlborough was furious with rage at Oxford's escape, and the Duchess is described as "almost distracted that she could not obtain her revenge." Magnanimity was not a characteristic virtue of the early days of the Georges.

This was what has sometimes been called the honourable acquittal of Oxford. An English judge once spoke humorously of a prisoner having been "honourably acquitted on a flaw in the indictment." Harley's was like this: it was not an acquittal; and it was not honourable to the man impeached, the House that forbore to press the impeachment, or the House that contrived his escape from trial. Oxford had been committed to the Tower and impeached for reasons that had little to do with his guilt or innocence, or with true public policy; he was released

from prison and relieved from further proceedings in just the same way. There was not evidence against him on which he could be convicted of high treason; and this was well known to his enemies when they first consigned him to the Tower. But there could not be the slightest moral doubt in the mind of any man that Oxford had intrigued with the Stuarts, and had endeavoured to procure their restoration, and that he had done this even since his committal to the Tower. His guilt, whatever it was, had been increased by him, and not diminished, since the beginning of the proceedings taken against him. But he had only done what most other statesmen of that day had been doing, or would have done if they had seen advantage in it. He was not more guilty than some of his bitterest opponents, the Duke of Marlborough among others. All but the very bitterest opponents were glad to be done with the whole business. It must have come to a more or less farcical end sooner or later, and sensible men were of opinion that the sooner the better. Of Harley, "Earl of Oxford and Earl Mortimer," as his titles ran, we shall not hear any more; we have already foreshadowed the remainder of his life and his death. This short account of his sham impeachment is introduced here merely as a part of the historic continuity of the narrative. History has few characters less interesting than that of Oxford. He held a position of greatness without being great; he fell, and even his fall could not invest him with tragic dignity.

On December 13, 1718, Lord Stanhope, who had been raised to the peerage, first as Viscount and then as Earl Stanhope, introduced into the House of Lords a measure ingeniously titled, "A Bill for strengthening the Protestant Interest in these Kingdoms." The title of the Bill was strictly appropriate, according to our present ideas, and according to the ideas of enlightened men in Stanhope's days also; but it must at first have misled some of Stanhope's audience. Most Churchmen are now ready to admit that the interests of the Church of England are strengthened by every measure which tends to secure religious equality; but most Churchmen were not quite so sure of this in the reign of George the First. The Bill brought in by Stanhope was really a

measure intended to relieve Dissenters from some of the penalties and disabilities imposed on them in the reign of Queen Anne.

The second reading of the Bill was the occasion of a long and animated debate. Several noble lords appealed to the opinion of the bishops, and the bishops spoke in answer to the appeal. The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Archbishop of York, the Bishop of London, the Bishop of Bristol, the Bishop of Rochester (Atterbury), the Bishop of Chester, and other prelates, spoke against the Bill. The Bishop of Bangor, the Bishop of Gloucester, the Bishop of Lincoln, the Bishop of Norwich, and the Bishop of Peterborough spoke in its favour. The Bishop of Peterborough's was a strenuous and an eloquent argument in favour of the principle of the Bill. "The words 'Church,' and 'Church's danger,'" said the Bishop of Peterborough, "had often been made use of to carry on sinister designs: and then these words made a mighty noise in the mouth of silly women and children"; but in his opinion the Church, which he defined to be a scriptural institution upon a legal establishment, was founded upon a rock, and "could not be in danger as long as we enjoyed the light of the Gospel and our excellent constitution." The argument would have been perfect if the eloquent Bishop had only left out the proviso about "our excellent constitution." For the opponents of the measure were contending, as was but natural, that the Bill, if passed into law, would not leave to the Church the constitutional protection which it had previously enjoyed.

The Bill passed the House of Lords on December 23, and was sent down to the Commons next day. It was read there a first time at once, was read a second time after a debate of some nine hours, and was passed without amendment by a majority of 221 against 170 on January 10, 1719. The test majority, however, by which the Bill had been decisively carried, on the motion to go into committee, was but small—243 against 202—and this majority was mainly due to the vote of the Scottish members. Stanhope, it is well known, would have made the measure more liberal than it was, and was dissuaded from this



intention by Sunderland, who insisted that if it were too liberal it would not pass the House of Commons. The result seems to prove that Sunderland was right. Walpole spoke against the Bill, limited as its concessions were. It would be interesting to know what sort of argument a man of Walpole's principles could have offered against a measure embodying the very spirit and sense of Whig policy. Unfortunately we have no means of knowing. The galleries of the House of Commons were rigidly closed against strangers on the day of the debate, and all we are allowed to hear concerning Walpole's part in the discussion is that "Mr. Robert Walpole made a warm speech, chiefly levelled against a great man in the present Administration." There is something characteristic of Walpole in this. He was never very particular about principle, or even about seeming consistency; but still, when opposing a measure which he might have been expected to support, he would have probably found it more expedient as well as more agreeable to confine himself chiefly to the task of attacking some "great man in the present Administration."

It ought to be said of Stanhope that he was distinctly in advance of his age as regarded the recognition of the principle of religious equality. He was not only anxious to put the Protestant Dissenters as much as possible on a level with Churchmen in all the privileges of citizenship, but he was even strongly in favour of mitigating the severity of the laws against the Roman Catholics. In his "History of England from the Peace of Utrecht to the Peace of Versailles," Lord Stanhope, the descendant of the Minister whose career and character have done so much honour to a name and a family, claims for him the credit of having put on paper a scheme "not undeserving of attention as the earliest germ of Roman Catholic emancipation." Stanhope's life was too soon and too suddenly cut short to allow him to push forward his scheme to anything like a practical position, and it is not probable that he could in any case have done much with it at such a time. Still, though fate cut short the life, it ought not to cut short the praise.

The Peerage Bill raised a question of some constitutional

importance. The principal object of this measure, which was introduced on February 28th, 1719, in the House of Lords, by the Duke of Somerset, and was believed to have Lord Sunderland for its actual author, was to limit the prerogative of the Crown in the creation of English peerages to a number not exceeding six in addition to those already existing. According to the provisions of the Bill, the Crown might still create new Peers on the extinction of old titles for want of male heirs; but, with this exception, the power of adding new peerages would be limited to the number of six. It was also proposed that, instead of the sixteen elective Peers from Scotland, twenty-five hereditary Peers should be created. This part of the Bill was that which at the time gave rise to most of the debate, in the House of Lords at least; but the really important constitutional question was that which involved the limitation of the privilege of the Sovereign. The Sovereign himself sent a special message to the House of Lords, informing them that "he has so much at heart the settling the Peerage of the whole kingdom upon such a foundation as may secure the freedom and constitution of Parliament in all future ages, that he is willing that his prerogative stand not in the way of so great and necessary a work." The ostensible motive for the proposed legislation was to get rid of difficulties caused by the over-increase of the numbers of the peerage since the union of England and Scotland; the real object was to guard against such a *coup d'état* as that accomplished in Anne's later days by the creation of the twelve Peers, of whom Mrs. Masham's husband was one. Nothing could be more generous and liberal, it might have been thought, than the expressed willingness of the King to surrender a part of his prerogative. This very readiness, however, expressed as it was by anticipation, and before the measure had yet made any progress, set a great many persons in and out of Parliament thinking. A vehement dispute soon arose, in which the pamphleteer, as usual, bore an important part. Addison, in one of his latest political and literary efforts, defended the proposed change. He described his pamphlet as the work of an "Old Whig." It was written as a reply to a pamphlet by Steele con-

demning the Bill, and signed "A Plebeian." Reply, retort, and rejoinder followed in more and more heated and personal style. The excitement created caused the measure to be dropped for the session; but it was brought in again in the session following, and it passed through all its stages in the Lords without trouble and with much rapidity.

When it came down to the House of Commons, however, a very different fate awaited it. Walpole assailed it with powerful eloquence and with unanswerable argument. The true nature of the scheme now came out. It would have simply rendered the representative chamber powerless against a majority of the chamber which did not represent. This will be readily apparent to any one who considers the subject for a moment by the light of our more modern experience. A majority of the House of Commons, representing, it may be, a vast majority of the people, agree to a certain measure. It goes up to the House of Lords, and is rejected there. What means in the end have the Commons, who represent the nation, of giving effect to the wishes of the nation? They have none but the privilege of the Crown to create, under the advice of Ministers, a sufficient number of new Peers to outvote the opponents of the measure. No alternative but revolution and civil war would be left if this were taken away. It is true that the power might be again abused by the Sovereign, as it was abused in Anne's days on the advice of the Tories; but we know that, as a matter of fact, it is hardly ever abused—hardly ever even used. Why is it hardly ever used? For the good reason that all men know it is existing, and can be used should the need arise. Even were it to be misused, the misuse would happen under responsible Ministers, who could be challenged to answer for it, and who would have to make good their defence. But if the House of Lords were made supreme over the House of Commons in every instance, by abolishing the unlimited prerogative which alone keeps it in check, who could then be held responsible for abuse—and before whom? Who could call the House of Lords to account? Before what tribunal could it be summoned to answer? The Peers are now independent of the people, and would



then be also independent of the Crown. There is hardly a great political reform known to modern England which, if the Peerage Bill had become law, would not have been absolutely rejected or else carried by a popular revolution.

Walpole attacked the Bill on every side. Such legislation, he insisted, "would in time bring back the Commons into the state of servile dependency they were in when they wore the badges of the Lords." It would, he contended, take away "one of the most powerful incentives to virtue, . . . since there would be no coming to honour but through the winding-sheet of an old decrepit lord and the grave of an extinct noble family." Walpole knew well his public and his time. He dwelt most strongly on this last consideration—that the Bill if passed into law would shut the gates of the Peerage against deserving commoners. He asked indignantly how the House of Lords could expect the Commons to give their concurrence to a measure "by which they and their posterities are to be excluded from the Peerage." The commoner who, after this way of putting the matter, assented to the Bill, must either have been an unambitious bachelor, or have been blessed in a singularly unambitious wife. Steele, who, as we have seen, had fought gallantly against the Bill with his pen, now made a very effective speech against it. He showed that the measure would alter the whole constitutional position of the House of Lords, whether as a legislative chamber or a court of appeal. "The restraint of the Peers to a certain number will make the most powerful of them have all the rest under their direction, . . . and judges so made by the blind order of birth will be capable of no other way of decision." The prerogative, as Steele put it very clearly, "can do no hurt when Ministers do their duty; but a settled number of Peers may abuse their power when no man is answerable for them, or can call them to account for their encroachments." The Bill was rejected by a majority of 269 votes against 177.

In March 1720 was passed an Act with a pompous and even portentous title: it was called "An Act for the better securing the Dependency of the Kingdom of Ireland upon the Crown of Great Britain." The preamble recited that

"attempts have been lately made to shake off the subjection of Ireland unto and dependence upon the Imperial Crown of this realm, which will be of dangerous consequence to Great Britain and Ireland." The reader would naturally assume that some fresh designs of the Stuarts had been discovered, having for their theatre the Catholic provinces of Ireland. Was James Stuart about to land at Kinsale? Had Alberoni got hold of the Irish Catholics? Was Atterbury plotting with Swift for an armed insurrection in Munster and Connaught? No; nothing of the kind was expected. The preamble of the alarming Act went on to set forth that the House of Lords in Ireland had lately, "against law, assumed to themselves a power and jurisdiction to examine, correct, and amend the judgments and decrees of the courts of justice in the kingdom of Ireland"; and this alleged trespass of the Irish House of Lords was the whole cause of the new measure. The Act declared that the Irish House of Lords had no jurisdiction "to judge of, affirm, or reverse any judgment, sentence, or decree given or made in any court within the said kingdom." This was an enactment of the most serious moment in a constitutional sense. It made the Parliament of Ireland subordinate to the Parliament of England; it reduced the Irish House of Lords from a position in Ireland equal to that of the House of Lords in England, down to the level of a mere provincial assembly. The occasion of the passing of this Act was the decision given by the Irish House of Lords in the celebrated cause of *Sherlock* against *Annesley*. It is not necessary for us to go into the story of the case at any length. It was a question of disputed property. The defendant had obtained a decree in the Irish Court of Exchequer, which decree was reversed on an appeal to the Irish House of Lords. The defendant appealed to the English House of Lords, who confirmed the judgment of the Irish Court of Exchequer, and ordered him to be put in possession of the disputed property. The Irish House of Lords stood by their authority, and actually ordered the Irish Barons of Exchequer to be taken into custody by Black Rod for having offended against the privileges of the Peers and the rights and

liberties of Ireland. The Act was passed to settle the question, and reduce the Irish House of Lords to submission and subordinate rank. It was settled merely of course by the strength of a majority in the English Parliament. The Duke of Leeds recorded a sensible and a manly protest against the vote of the majority of his brother Peers. One or two of the reasons he gives for his protest are worth reading even now. The eleventh reason is. "Because it is the glory of the English laws and the blessing attending Englishmen, that they have justice administered at their doors, and not to be drawn as formerly to Rome by appeals"; "and by this order the people of Ireland must be drawn from Ireland hither whosoever they receive any injustice from the Chancery there, by which means poor men must be trampled on, as not being able to come over to seek for justice." The thirteenth reason is still more concise: "Because this taking away the jurisdiction of the Lords' House in Ireland may be a means to disquiet the Lords there and disappoint the King's affairs."

The protest, it need hardly be said, received little or no attention. More than sixty years after, when England was perplexed in foreign and colonial troubles, the spirit of the protest walked abroad and animated Grattan and the Irish Volunteers. But in 1720 the Parliament at Westminster was free to do as it pleased with the Parliament in Dublin. To the vast majority of the Irish people it might have been a matter of absolute indifference which Parliament reigned supreme. They had as little to expect from Dublin as from Westminster. The Irish Parliament was quite as ready to promote legislation for the further persecution of Catholics as any English Parliament could be. The Parliament in Dublin was merely an assembly of English and Protestant colonists. Yet it is worthy of remark that, then and after, the sympathies of the people, when they had any means of showing them, went with the Irish Parliament simply because of the name it bore. It was, at all events, the so-called Parliament of Ireland; it represented, at least in name, the authority of the Irish people. So long as it existed there was some recognition of the fact that Ireland



was something more than a merely conquered country held by the title of the sword, and governed by arbitrary proclamation, secret warrant, and drum-head court-martial.

Death had been busy among eminent men for some few years. The Duke of Shrewsbury, the "king of hearts," the statesman whose appointment as Lord Treasurer secured the throne of Great Britain for the Hanoverian family, died on February 18, 1717. William Penn, the founder of the great American State of Pennsylvania, closed his long active and fruitful life in 1718. We have here only to record his death; the history of his deeds belongs to an earlier time. Controversy has now quite ceased to busy itself about his noble character, and his life of splendid unostentatious beneficence. His name, which without his consent and against his wishes was made part of the name of the State which he founded, will be remembered in connection with its history while the Delaware and the Schuylkill flow. Of his famous treaty with the Indians nothing perhaps was ever better said than the comment of Voltaire, that it was the only league between savages and white men which was never sworn to and never broken. Addison died, still comparatively young, on June 17, 1719. He had reached the highest point of his political career but a short time before, when, on one of the changes of office between Stanhope and Sunderland, he became one of the principal Secretaries of State. His health, however, was breaking down, and he never had the slightest gift or taste for political life. "Pity," said Mrs. Manley, the authoress of "The New Atlantis," speaking of Addison, "that politics and sordid interest should have carried him out of the road of Helicon and snatched him from the embraces of the Muses." But it seems quite unjust to ascribe Addison's divergence into political ways to any sordid interest. He had political friends who loved him, and he went with them into politics as he might have travelled in company with them, and for the sake of their company, although caring nothing for travel himself. No man was better aware of his incapacity for the real business of public life. Addison had himself pointed out all the objections to his political advancement before that advancement was pressed upon

him. He was not a statesman ; he was not an administrator ; he could not do any genuine service as head of a department ; he was not even a good clerk ; he was a wretched speaker ; he was consumed by a morbid shyness, almost as oppressive as that of the poet Cowper in a later day, or of Nathaniel Hawthorne, the American novelist, later still. His whole public career was at best but a harmless mistake. It has done no harm to his literary fame. The world has almost forgotten it. Even lovers of Addison might have to be reminded now that the creator of Sir Roger de Coverley was once a diplomatic agent, and a Secretary of State, and a member of the House of Commons. Some of the essays which Addison contributed to "The Spectator" are like enough to outlive the system of government by party, and perhaps even the whole system of representative government. Sir Roger de Coverley will not be forgotten until men forget Parson Adams, and Robinson Crusoe, and Gil Blas, and for that matter Sir John Falstaff and Don Quixote.

For some time things were looking well at home and abroad. The policy of the Government appeared to have been completely successful on the Continent. The confederations that had been threatening England were dissolved or broken up ; the Jacobite conspiracies seemed to have been made hopeless and powerless. The friendship established between England and the Regent of France had to all seeming robbed the Stuarts of their last chance. James the Chevalier had no longer a home on French soil. Paris could not any more be the headquarters of his organisation and the scene of his mock Court. The Regent had kept his promises to the English Government. It was well known that, so far from encouraging or permitting the designs of the exiled family against England, he would do all in his power to frustrate them ; as, indeed, he had an opportunity of doing not long after. Never before, perhaps never since, was there so cordial an understanding between England and France. Never could there have been a time when such an understanding was of greater importance to England.

At home the prospect seemed equally bright. Walpole

had contrived to ingratiate himself more and more with the Prince of Wales, and had become his confidential adviser. Acting on his counsel, the Prince made his submission to the King; and acting on Stanhope's counsel, the King accepted it. The Sovereign and his heir had a meeting and were reconciled; for the time, at least. Walpole consented to join the Administration, content for the present to fill the humble place of Paymaster to the Forces, without a seat in the Cabinet. He returned, in fact, to the ministerial position which he had first occupied, and from which he had been promoted, and must have seemed to himself somewhat in the position of a boy who, after having got high in his class, has got down very low again, and is well content to mount up a step or two from the humblest position. Walpole knew what he was doing, and must have been quite satisfied in his own mind that he was not likely to remain very long Paymaster to the Forces, although he could not by any possibility have anticipated the strange succession of events by which he was destined soon to be left without a rival. For the present he was in the Administration, but he took little part in its actual work. He did not even appear to have any real concern in it. He spent as much of his time as he could at Houghton, his pleasant country seat in Norfolk. Townshend, too, had been induced to join the Administration. To him was assigned the position of President of the Council.

Thus there appeared to be a truce to quarrels and to enmities abroad and at home. There was no dispute with any of the great Continental Powers; there was no dread of the Stuarts. Ministerial rivalries had been reduced to concordance and quiet; the traditional quarrel between the Sovereign and the heir-apparent had been composed. It might have been thought that a time of peace and national prosperity had been assured. In the history of nations, however, we commonly find that nothing more certainly bodes unsettlement than a general conviction that everything is settled for ever.



## CHAPTER XI

## "THE EARTH HATH BUBBLES"

ONE of the comedies of Ben Jonson gives some vivid and humorous illustrations of the mania for projects, speculations, patents, and monopolies that at his time had taken possession of the minds of Englishmen. There is an enterprising person who declares that he can coin money out of cobwebs, raise wool upon egg-shells, and make grass grow out of marrow-bones. He has a project "for the recovery of drowned land," a scheme for a new patent for the dressing of dogskins for gloves, a plan for the bottling of ale, a device for making wine out of blackberries, and various other schemes cut and dry for what would now be called floating companies to make money. The civilised world is visited with this epidemic of project and speculation from time to time. In the reign of George the First such a mania attacked England much more fiercely than it had done even in the days of Ben Jonson. It came to us this time from France. The close of a great war is always a tempting and a favourable time for such enterprises. Finances are out of order; a season of spurious commercial activity has come to an end; new resources are to be sought for somehow; and man must change to be other than he is when he wholly ceases to believe in financial miracle-working. There is an air of plausibility about most of the new projects; and, like the scheme told of in Ben Jonson for the recovery of drowned lands, the enterprise is usually something within human power to accomplish, if only human skill could make it pay. The exchequer of France had been brought into a condition of something very like bankruptcy by the long and wasting war; and a projector was found who promised to supply the deficiency as boldly and as liberally as Mephistopheles does in the second part of "Faust." John Law, a Scotchman, and unquestionably a man of great ability and financial skill, had settled in France in consequence of having fought a

duel and killed his man in his own country. Law set up a company which was to have a monopoly of the trade of the whole Mississippi region in North America, and on condition of the monopoly was to pay off the National Debt of France. A scheme of the kind within due limitations would have been reasonable enough, so far as the working of the Mississippi region was concerned ; but Law went on extending and extending the scope of its supposed operations, until it might almost as well have attempted to fold in the orb of the earth. The shares in his company went up with a sudden bound. He had the patronage of the Regent, and of all the Court circle. Gambling in shares became the fashion, the passion of Paris, and, indeed, of all France. Shares bought one day were sold at an immense advance the next, or even the same day. Men and women nearly bankrupt in purse before suddenly found themselves in possession of large sums of money, for which they had to all appearance run no risk and made no sacrifice whatever. Princes and tradesmen, duchesses and sempstresses and harlots, clamoured, intrigued, and battled for shares. The offices in the Rue Quincampoix, a street then inhabited by bankers, stockbrokers, and exchange agents, were besieged all day long with crowds of eager competitors for shares. The street was choked with fine equipages, until it was found absolutely necessary to close it against all horses and carriages. All the rank and fashion of Paris flung itself into this game of speculation. Every one has heard the story of the hunchback who made a little fortune by the letting of his hump as a desk on which impatient speculators might scribble their applications for shares. A French novelist, M. Paul Feval, has made good use of this story, and London still remembers to what a brilliant dramatic account it was turned by Mr. Fechter. Law was the most powerful and the most courted man of his day. In his youth he had been a gallant and a free liver, a man of dress and fashion and intrigue, who delighted in scandalous entanglements with women. The fashion and beauty of Paris was for the hour at his feet. Think of a brilliant gallant who could make one rich in a moment ! The mother of the Regent described in a coarse and

pungent sentence the sort of homage which Parisian ladies would have been willing to pay to Law if he had so desired. St. Simon, the mere *littérateur* and diplomatist, almost alone kept his head, and was not to be dazzled. Since the fable of Midas, he said, he had not heard of any one having the power to turn all he touched into gold, and he did not believe that virtue was given to M. Law. There is no doubt that Law was a man of great ability as a financier, and that his scheme in the beginning had promise in it. It was, as Burke has said of the scheme and its author, the public enthusiasm, and not Law himself, which chose to build on the base of his scheme a structure which it could not bear. It does not seem by any means certain that a project quite as wild might not be launched in London or Paris at the present day, and find almost as great a temporary success, and blaze, like Law's, the comet of a season. While the season lasted the comet blazed with a light that filled the social sky.

Law was for the time the most powerful man in France. A momentary whisper that he was out of health sent the funds down, and eclipsed the gaiety of nations. He was admitted into the Regent's Privy Council, and made Controller-general of the finances of France. The result was inevitable. There was as yet nothing behind the promises and the shares of the Mississippi Company. If finance could have gone on for ever promise-crammed, things would have been all right. But you cannot feed capons so, as Hamlet tells us; and you cannot long feed shareholders so. Law's scheme suddenly collapsed one day, and brought ruin on hundreds of thousands in France. While, however, it was still afloat in the air, its gaudy colours dazzled the eyes of the South Sea Company in England.

At the north-west end of Threadneedle Street, within view of the remains of Richard the Third's Palace of Crosby, stands a solid red-brick building, substantial, respectable, business-like, dignified with the dignity of some century and a half of existence. Time has softened and deepened its ruddy hue to a mellow, rich tone, contrasting pleasantly with the white copings and facings of its windows,



and suggesting, agreeably, something of the smooth brown cloth and neat white linen of a well-to-do City gentleman of the last century. Yet that solemn, massive, prosperous-looking building is the enduring monument of one of the most gigantic shams on record, a sham and swindle that was the prolific parent of a whole brood of shams and swindles; for that building, with honesty and credit and mercantile honour written in its every line and angle, is all that remains of the South Sea House. It is a melancholy place. The Hall of the Kings at Karnak is hardly more melancholy or more ghost-haunted. Not that the House has now that "desolation something like Balclutha's" which Charles Lamb attributed to it more than half a century ago. The place has changed greatly since Elia the Italian and Elia the Englishman were fellow-clerks at the South Sea House. Those dusty maps of Mexico, "dim as dreams," have long been taken away. The company itself, having outlived alike its fame and its infamy, lingering inappropriately like some guest that "hath outstayed his welcome time," was wound up at last within the memory of living men. The stately gateway no longer opens upon the "grave court, with cloisters and pillars," where South Sea stock so often changed hands. The cloisters and pillars have gone; the court has been converted into a hall of a sort of exchange, where merchants daily meet. The days of the desolation of the South Sea House are as much a thing of its past as its earlier splendour. Its corridors are now crowded with offices occupied by merchants of every nationality, from Scotland to Greece, and by companies connected with every portion of the globe. Only at night, on Saturday afternoons, and during the still peace of a City Sabbath, do the noise of men and the stir of business cease in the South Sea House. Yet, nevertheless, when one thinks of all that has happened there, of the dreams and hopes and miseries of which it was the begetter, it remains one of the most melancholy temples to folly that man has yet erected.

The South Sea Company had been established in 1710 by Harley himself, and was going along quietly and soberly enough for the time; but the example of the Mississippi Company was too strong for it. The South Sea Company,

too, made to itself waxen wings, and prepared to fly above the clouds. The directors offered to relieve the State of its debt on condition of obtaining a monopoly of the South Sea trade. The nation was to take shares in the company in the first instance ; and to deal with the company, for its commercial and other wares, in the second ; and by means of the exclusive dealing in shares and in products it was to pay off the National Debt. In other words, three men, all having nothing, and heavily in debt, were to go into exclusive dealings with each other, and were thus to make fortunes, discharge their liabilities, and live in luxury for the rest of their days. Stated thus, the proposition looks marvellously absurd. But it is not, in its essential conditions, more absurd than many a financial project which floats successfully for a time. Money-making, the hardest and most practical of all occupations, the task which can soonest be tested by results, is the business of all others in which men are most easily led astray, most greedy to be led astray. Sydney Smith speaks of a certain French lady whose whole nature cried out for her seduction. There are seasons when the whole nature of man seems to cry out for his financial seduction. The South Sea project expanded and inflated as the Mississippi scheme had done. Its temporary success turned the heads of the whole population.

Hundreds of schemes, still more wild, sprang into sudden existence. Some of the projects then put forward, and believed in, surpass in senseless extravagance anything satirised by Ben Jonson. So wild was the passion for new enterprises, that it seemed as if, at one time, anybody had only to announce any scheme, however preposterous, in order to find people competing for shares in it. The only condition of things in our own time that could be compared with this epoch of insane speculation is the railway mania of 1846, when, for a brief season, George Hudson was king, and set up his hat in the market-place, and all England bowed down in homage to it. But the epidemic of speculation in the reign of the Railway King was comparatively harmless and reasonable when compared with the midsummer madness of the South Sea scheme.

The South Sea scheme was brought before the notice

of the House of Commons in 1720. The Chancellor of the Exchequer was Mr. Aislachie. We have already seen Mr. Aislachie as one of the secret committee who recommended the impeachment of Oxford and Bolingbroke. How well he was fitted for his office will appear from the fact that he was altogether taken in by the project, and by the financial arguments of those who brought it forward. Sunderland and Stanhope were taken in likewise—but there was nothing very surprising in that. A statesman of those days did not profess to understand anything about finance or economics, unless these subjects happened to belong to his department; and the statesman was exceptional who could honestly profess to understand them even when they did. Walpole, however, was a Minister of a different order. He was the first of the line of statesmen-financiers. He saw through the bubble, and endeavoured to make others see as clearly as he did himself. Walpole assailed the project in a pamphlet, and opposed it strenuously in his place in Parliament. He was not at that time a Minister of the Crown; perhaps, if he had been, the South Sea Bill might never have been presented to Parliament; but the nation and the Parliament were off their heads just then. The caricaturists and the authors of lampoon verses positively found out the South Sea scheme before the financiers and men of the City.

On January 22, 1720, the House of Commons, sitting in what was then termed a Grand Committee, or what would now be called Committee of the whole House, took into consideration a proposal of the South Sea Company towards the redemption of the public debts. The proposal set forth that “the Corporation of the Governor and Company of Merchants of Great Britain, trading to the South Sea and other parts of America, and for encouraging the fishery, having under their consideration how they may be most serviceable to his Majesty and his Government, and to show their zeal and readiness to concur in the great and honourable design of reducing the national debts,” do “humbly apprehend that if the public debts and annuities mentioned in the annexed estimate were taken into and made part of the capital stock of the said company, it



would greatly contribute to that most desirable end." The company then set forth the conditions under which they proposed to convert themselves into an agency for paying off the national debt, and making a profit for themselves.

The proposal fell somewhat short of the general expectation, which looked for nothing less than a sort of financial philosopher's stone. Besides, the Bank of England was willing to compete with the South Sea Company. If the company could coin money out of cobwebs, why should not the Bank be able to accomplish the same feat? The friends of the Bank reminded the House of Commons of the great services which that corporation had rendered to the Government in the most difficult times, and urged, with much show of justice, that if any advantage was to be made by public bargains, the Bank should be preferred before a company that had never done anything for the nation. Well might Aislalie, the unfortunate Chancellor of the Exchequer, whose shame and ruin we shall soon come to tell of, exclaim in the speech which he made when defending himself for the second time before the House of Lords, that "the spirit of bubbling had prevailed so universally, that the very Bank became a bubble—and this not by chance or necessity, or from any engagement to raise money for the public service, but from the same spirit that actuated Temple Mills or Garraway's Fishery." In plain truth, as poor Aislalie pointed out, the Bank started a scheme in imitation of the South Sea Company, and the House of Commons gave time for its proper development. The Bank offered its scheme on February 1, and by that time the South Sea Company had seen their way to mend their hand and submit more attractive proposals. Then the Bank, not to be outrivalled, soon made a second proposal as well. The House took the rival propositions into consideration. Walpole was the chief advocate of the Bank. No doubt he had come to the reasonable conclusion that if there could be any hope of success for such a scheme, it would be found in the Bank of England rather than in the South Sea Company. Mr. Aislalie, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, made himself the champion of the company, and assured the House that its propositions were

of far greater advantage to the country than those of the Bank. Under his persuasive influence the House agreed to accept the tender, as we may call it, of the company, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Secretary Craggs, and others, were ordered to prepare and bring in a Bill to give legislative sanction to the scheme.

The Bill passed the Commons, and went up to the House of Lords. To the credit of the Peers, it has to be said that they received it more doubtfully, and were slower to admit the certainty of its blessings, than the members of the representative chamber had been. Lord North and Grey condemned it as not only making way for, but actually countenancing and authorising "the fraudulent and pernicious practice of stock-jobbing." The Duke of Wharton declared that "the artificial and prodigious rise of the South Sea stock was a dangerous bait, which might decoy many unwary people to their ruin, and allure them, by a false prospect of gain, to part with what they had got by their labour and industry, to purchase imaginary riches." Lord Cowper said that the Bill, "like the Trojan horse, was ushered in and received with great pomp and acclamations of joy, but was contrived for treachery and destruction." Lord Sunderland, however, spoke warmly in favour of the Bill, and contended that "they who countenanced the scheme of the South Sea Company had nothing in their view but the easing the nation of part of that heavy load of debt it laboured under"; and argued that the scheme would enable the directors of the company at once to pay off the debt, and to secure large dividends to their shareholders. The Lords decided on admitting the South Sea Company's Trojan horse. Eighty-three votes were in favour of the Bill, and only seventeen against it. The Bill was read a third time on April 7, and received the royal assent on June 11. The King's speech, delivered that day, at the close of the session, declared that "the good foundation you have prepared this session for the payment of the national debts, and the discharge of a great part of them, without the least violation of the public faith, will, I hope, strengthen more and more the union I desire to see among all my

subjects, and make our friendship yet more valuable to all foreign Powers.”

The immediate result of the parliamentary authority thus given to what was purely a bubble scheme was to bring upon the Legislature a perfect deluge of petitions from all manner of projectors. Patents and monopolies were sought for the carrying on of fisheries in Greenland and various other regions; for the growth, manufacture, and sale of hemp, flax, and cotton; for the making of sail-cloth; for a general insurance against fire; for the planting and rearing of madder to be used by dyers; for the preparing and curing of Virginia tobacco for snuff, and making it into the same within all his Majesty's dominions. Schemes such as these were comparatively reasonable; but there were others of a different kind. Petitions were gravely submitted to Parliament praying for patents to be granted to the projectors of enterprises for trading in hair; for the universal supply of funerals to all parts of Great Britain; for insuring and increasing children's fortunes; for insuring masters and mistresses against losses from the carelessness or misconduct of servants; for insuring against thefts and robberies; for extracting silver from lead; for the transmutation of silver into malleable fine metal; for buying and fitting out ships to suppress pirates; for a wheel for perpetual motion, and—with which project perhaps we may close our list of specimens—“for carrying on an undertaking of great advantage, but nobody to know what it is.” Of course some of these projects were mere vulgar swindles. Even in that season of marvellous projection it is not to be supposed that the inventors of the last-mentioned scheme had any serious belief in its efficacy. The author of the project for the perpetual motion wheel was, we take it, a sincere personage and enthusiast. His scheme has been coming up again and again before the world since his time; and we have known good men who would have staked all they held dear in life upon the possibility of its realisation. But the would-be patentee of the undertaking of great advantage, nobody to know what it is, was a man of a different order. He understood human nature in certain of its moods. He knew that



there are men and women who can be got to believe in anything which holds out the promise of quick and easy gain. If he found a few dozen greedy and selfish fools to help his project with a little money, that would no doubt be the full attainment of his ends. Probably he was successful. The very boldness of his avowal of secrecy would have a charm for many. One day would be enough for him, the day when he sent in his demand for a patent. The bare demand would bring him dupes.

The first great blow struck at the South Sea Company came from the South Sea Company itself. Several bubble companies began to imitate the financial system which the more favoured institution had set up. The South Sea Company put in motion certain legal proceedings against some of the offenders. The South Sea Company had the support and countenance of the high legal authorities, and found no difficulty in obtaining injunctions against the other associations, directing them not to go beyond the strict legal privileges secured to them by their charters of incorporation. Among the undertakings thus admonished were the English Copper Company and the Welsh Copper and Lead Company. His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales happened to be a governor of the English Copper Company, and the Lords Justices were polite enough to send the Prince a message expressing the great regret they felt at having to declare illegal an enterprise with which he was connected. The Prince, not to be outdone in politeness, received the admonition, we are told, "very graciously," and sent on his part a message to the company requesting them to accept his resignation, and to elect some one else a governor in his place. The proceedings which the South Sea Company had set on foot against their audacious rivals and imitators had, however, the inconvenient effect of directing too much of public attention to the principles upon which they conducted their own business. Confidence began to waver, to be shaken, to give way altogether; and when people ask whether a speculation is a bubble, the bubble, if it is one, is already burst.

The whole basis of Law's system, and of the South Sea

Company's schemes as well, was the principle that the prosperity of a nation is increased in proportion to the quantity of money in circulation ; and that as no State can have gold enough for all its commercial transactions, paper money may be issued to an unlimited extent, and its full value maintained without its being convertible at pleasure into hard cash. This supposed principle has been proved again and again to be a mere fallacy and paradox ; but it always finds enthusiastic believers who have plausible arguments in its support. It appears, indeed, to have a singular fascination for some persons in all times and communities. It might seem an obvious truism that under no possible conditions can people in general be got to give as much for a promise to pay as for a certain and instant payment ; and yet this truism would have to be proved a falsehood in order to establish a basis for such a project as that of Law. Even were the basis to be established, the project would then have to be worked fairly and honestly out, which was not done either in the case of the Mississippi Company or of the South Sea Company. If each had been founded on a true financial principle, each was worked in a false and fraudulent way. At its best the South Sea Company in its later development would have been a bubble. Worked as it actually was, it proved to be a swindle. A committee of secrecy was appointed by the House of Commons to enquire into the condition of the company. The committee found that false and fictitious entries had been made in the company's books ; that leaves had been torn out ; that some books had been destroyed altogether, and that others had been carried off and secreted. The vulgar arts of the card-sharper and the thimble-rigger had been prodigally employed to avert detection and ruin by the directors of a company which was promoted and protected by Ministers of State and by the favourites of the King.

Some idea of the wide-spread nature of the disaster which was inflicted by the wreck of the company may be formed from a rapid glance at some of the petitions for redress and relief which were presented to the House of Commons. We find among them petitions from the coun-

ties of Hertford, Dorset, Essex, Buckingham, Derby; the cities of Bristol, Exeter, Lincoln; the boroughs of Oakhampton, Amersham, Bedford, Chipping Wycombe, Abingdon, Sudbury. East Retford, Evesham, Newark-upon-Trent, Newbury, and many other places. We have purposely omitted to take account of any of the London communities. The wildest excitement prevailed; and it is characteristic of the time to note that the national calamity—for it was no less—aroused fresh hopes in the minds of the Jacobites. Such a calamity, such a scandal, it was thought, could not but bring shame and ruin upon the Whig Ministers, and through them discredit on the Sovereign and the Court. It was believed, it was hoped, that Sunderland would be found to be implicated in the swindle. Why should not such a crisis, such a humiliation to the Whigs, be the occasion of a new and a more successful attempt on the part of the Jacobites? The King was again in Hanover. He was summoned home in hot haste. On December 8, 1720, the two Houses of Parliament were assembled to hear the reading of the royal speech proroguing the session; and in the speech the King was made to express his concern “for the unhappy turn of affairs which has so much affected the public credit at home,” and to recommend most earnestly to the House of Commons “that you consider of the most effectual and speedy methods to restore the national credit, and fix it upon a lasting foundation.” “You will, I doubt not,” the speech went on to say, “be assisted in so commendable and necessary a work by every man that loves his country.” A week or so before the royal speech was read, on November 30, 1720, Charles Edward, eldest son of James Stuart, was born at Rome. The undaunted mettle of Atterbury came into fresh and vigorous activity with the birth of the Stuart heir, and the apparently imminent ruin of the Whig Ministers.

Robert Walpole had been spending some time peacefully at his country place, Houghton, in Norfolk. Hunting, bull-baiting, and drinking were the principal amusements with which Walpole entertained his guests there. Sometimes the guests were persons of royal rank: Walpole once entertained the Grand Duke of Tuscany. Sometimes the



throng of his visitors and his neighbours to the hunting-field could only be compared, says a letter written at the time, to an army in its march. Walpole never lost sight, however, of what was going on in the metropolis. He used to send a trusty Norfolk man as his express messenger to run all the way on foot from Houghton to London, and carry letters for him to confidential friends, and bring him back the answers. When he found how badly things were going in London on the bursting of the South Sea bubble, he hastened up to town. His presence was sadly needed there. It is not without interest to think of James Stuart in Rome, and Walpole in Houghton, both keeping their eyes fixed on the gradual exposure of the South Sea swindle, and both alike hoping to find their account in the national calamity. All the advantage was with the statesman and not with the Prince. The English people of all opinions and creeds were tolerably well assured that if any one could help them out of the difficulty, Walpole could; and it required the faith of the most devoted Jacobite to make any man of business believe that the return of the exiled Stuarts could do much to keep off national bankruptcy. Walpole had waited long. His time was now come at last.

Walpole had kept his head cool during the days when the company was soaring to the skies; he kept his head equally cool when it came down with a crash. "He had never," he said in the House of Commons, "approved of the South Sea scheme, and was sensible it had done a great deal of mischief; but, since it could not be undone, he thought it the duty of all good men to give their helping hand towards retrieving it; and, with this view, he had already bestowed some thoughts on a proposal to restore public credit, which at the proper time he would submit to the wisdom of the House." Walpole had made money by the South Sea scheme. The sound knowledge of the principles of finance which enabled him to see that the enterprise thus conducted could not pay in the end enabled him also to see that it could pay up to a certain point, and when that point had been reached he quietly sold out and saved his gains. The King's mistresses and their relatives

also made good profit out of the transactions. The Prince of Wales was a gainer by some of the season's speculations. But when the crash came the ruin was wide-spread; it amounted to the proportions of a national calamity. The ruling classes raged and stormed against the vile conspirators who had disappointed them in their expectations of coining money out of cobwebs. The Lords and Commons held enquiries, passed resolutions, demanded impeachments. It was soon made manifest beyond all doubt that members of the Government had been scandalously implicated in the worst parts of the fraudulent speculations. Mr. Aislalie, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, was only too clearly shown to be one of the leading delinquents. Mr. Craggs, the father, Postmaster-General, and James Craggs, the son, Secretary of State, were likewise involved. Both were remarkable men. The father had begun life as a common baroer, and partly by capacity and partly by the thrift that follows fawning had made his way up in the world, until he reached the height from which he was suddenly and so ignominiously to fall. It was hardly worth the trouble thus to toil and push and climb, only to tumble down with such shame and ruin. Craggs the father had had great transfers of South Sea stock made to him for which he never paid. Craggs the son, the Secretary of State, had acted as the go-between in the transactions of the company with the King's mistresses, whereby the influence of these ladies was purchased for a handsome consideration. Charles Stanhope, one of the Secretaries to the Treasury, and cousin of the Minister, was shown to have received large value in the stock of the company for which he never paid. The most ghastly ruin fell on some of these men. Craggs the younger died suddenly on the very day when the report incriminating him was read in the House of Commons. Craggs the father poisoned himself a few days afterwards. Pope wrote an epitaph on the son, in which he described him as—

Statesman, yet friend of truth; of soul sincere,  
In action faithful and in honour clear;  
Who broke no promise, served no private end,  
Who gained no title and who lost no friend.

Epitaphs seem to have been genuine tributes of personal friendship in those days ; they had no reference to merit or to truth. One's friend had every virtue because he was one's friend. Secret committees might condemn, Parliament might degrade, juries might convict, impartial history might stigmatise ; but one's friend remained one's friend all the same, and if one had the gift of verse was to be held up to the admiration of time and eternity in a glorifying epitaph. We have fallen on more prosaic days now ; the living admirer of a modern Craggs would leave his epitaph unwritten if he could not make facts and feelings fit in together better.

A better and more eminent man than Aislabie or either Craggs lost his life in consequence of the South Sea calamity. No one had accused, or even suspected, Lord Stanhope of any share in the financial swindle. Even the fact that his cousin was one of those accused of guilty complicity with it did not induce any one to believe that the Minister of State had any share in the guilt. Yet Stanhope was one of the first victims of the crisis. The Duke of Wharton, son of the late Minister, had just come of age. He was already renowned as a brilliant, audacious profligate. He was president of the Hell-fire Club ; he and some of his comrades were the nightly terror of London streets. Wharton thought fit to make himself the champion of public purity in the debates on the South Sea Company's ruin. He attacked the Ministers fiercely ; he attacked Stanhope in especial. Stanhope replied to him with far greater warmth than the weight of any attack from Wharton would seem to have called for. Excited beyond measure, Stanhope burst a blood-vessel in his anger. He was carried home, and he died the next day—February 5, 1721. His life had been pure and noble. He was a sincere lover of his country ; a brave and often successful soldier ; a statesman of high purpose if not of the most commanding talents. His career as a soldier was brought to a close when he had to capitulate to that master of war and profligacy, the Duke de Vendôme ; an encounter of a different kind with another brilliant profligate robbed him of his life.



The House of Commons promptly passed a series of resolutions declaring "John Aislable, Esquire, a Member of this House, then Chancellor of the Exchequer and one of the Commissioners of his Majesty's Treasury," guilty of "most notorious, dangerous, and infamous corruption," and ordering his expulsion from the House and his committal as a prisoner to the Tower. This resolution was carried without a dissentient word. The House of Commons went on next to consider that part of the report which applied to Lord Sunderland, and a motion was made declaring that "after the proposals of the South Sea Company were accepted by this House, and a Bill ordered to be brought in thereupon, and before such Bill passed, £50,000 of the capital stock of the South Sea Company was taken in by Robert Knight, late cashier of the said company, for the use and upon the account of Charles, Earl of Sunderland, a Lord of Parliament and First Commissioner of the Treasury, without any valuable consideration paid, or sufficient security given, for payment for or acceptance of the same."

Sunderland had too many friends and too much influence to be dealt with as if he were Aislable. A fierce debate sprang up. The evidence against him was not by any means so clear as in the case of Aislable. There was room for a doubt as to Sunderland's personal knowledge of all that had been done in his name. His influence and power secured him the full benefit of the doubt. The motion implicating him was rejected by a majority of 233 votes against 172, "which, however," says a contemporary account, "occasioned various reasonings and reflections." Charles Stanhope, too, was lucky enough to get off, on a division, by a very narrow majority.

A letter from an English traveller at Rome to his father, bearing date May 6, 1721, and privately printed in 1884 for the first time, under the auspices of the Clarendon Society, of Edinburgh, gives an interesting account of the reception of the writer, an English Protestant, by James Stuart and his wife. That part of the letter which is of present interest to us tells of the remarks made by James on the subject of the South Sea catastrophe. James spoke

of the investigations of the secret committee, from which he had no great hopes; for, he said, the authors of the calamity "would find means to be above the common course of justice." "Some may imagine," continued he, "that these calamities are not displeasing to me because they may in some measure turn to my advantage. I renounce all such unworthy thoughts. The love of my country is the first principle of my worldly wishes, and my heart bleeds to see so brave and honest a people distressed and misled by a few wicked men, and plunged into miseries almost irretrievable." "Thereupon," says the writer of the letter "he rose briskly from his chair, and expressed his concern with fire in his eyes."

Exiled Sovereigns are in the habit of expressing concern for their country with fire in their eyes; they are also in the habit of regarding their own return to power as the one sole means of relieving the country from its distress. The English gentleman who describes this scene represents himself as not to be outdone in patriotism of his own even by the exiled Prince. "I could not disavow much of what he said; yet I own I was piqued at it, for very often compassionate terms from the mouth of an adverse party are grating. It appeared to me so on this occasion; therefore I replied, 'It's true, sir, that our affairs in England lie at present under many hardships by the South Seas mismanagement; but it is a constant maxim with us Protestants to undergo a great deal for the security of our religion, which we could not depend upon under a Romish Government.'" This speech, not over-polite, the Prince took in good part, and entered upon an argument so skillfully "that I am apprehensive I should become half a Jacobite if I should continue following these discourses any longer." "Therefore," says the writer, "I will give you my word I will enter no more upon arguments of this kind with him." The Prince and his visitor were perhaps both playing a part to some extent, and the whole discourse was probably a good deal less theatric in style than the English traveller has reported. But there can be no doubt that the letter fairly illustrates the spirit in which the leading Jacobites watched over the financial troubles in England,

and the new hopes with which they were inspired—hopes destined to be translated into new action before very long. Nor can it be denied that the speech of the English visitor correctly represented the feeling which was growing stronger day after day in the minds of prudent people at home in England. The time was coming—had almost come—when a political disturbance or a financial panic in these kingdoms was to be accounted sufficient occasion for a change of Ministers, but not for a revolution.

## CHAPTER XII

### AFTER THE STORM

SWIFT wrote more than one poem on the South Sea mania. That which was written in 1721, and is called "South Sea," is a wonder of wit and wisdom. It shows the hollowness of the scheme in some new, odd, and striking light in every metaphor and every verse. "A guinea," Swift reminds his readers, "will not pass at market for a farthing more, shown through a multiplying glass, than what it always did before."

So cast it in the Southern Seas,  
And view it through a jobber's bill,  
Put on what spectacles you please,  
Your guinea's but a guinea still.

Other poets had not as much prudence and sound sense as Swift. Pope put some of his money, a good deal of it, into South Sea stock, contrary to the earnest advice of Atterbury, and lost it. Swift reflected faithfully the temper of the time in savage verses, which call out for the punishment by death of the fraudulent directors of the company. Antæus, Swift tells us, was always restored to fresh strength as often as he touched the earth; Hercules subdued him at last by holding him up in the air and strangling him there. Suspended a while in the air, according to the same principle, our directors, he admonishes the country, will be properly tamed and dealt with. Many public enemies of



the directors gave themselves credit for moderation and humanity on the ground that they would not have the culprits tortured to death, but merely executed in the ordinary way.

Walpole set himself first of all to restore public credit. His object was not so much the punishment of fraudulent directors as the tranquillising of the public mind, and the subsidence of national panic. He proposed one measure in the first instance to accomplish this end; but that not being sufficiently comprehensive he introduced another Bill, which was finally adopted by both Houses of Parliament. Briefly described, this scheme so adjusted the financial affairs of the South Sea Company, that five millions of the seven which the directors had agreed to pay the public were remitted; the encumbrances to the company were cleared off to a certain extent by the confiscation of the estates of the fraudulent directors; the credit of the company's bonds was maintained; thirty-three pounds six shillings and eightpence per cent. were divided amongst the proprietors, and two millions were reserved towards the liquidation of the National Debt. The company was, therefore, put into a position to carry out its various public engagements, and the panic was soon over. Many of the proprietors of the company complained bitterly of the manner in which they had been treated by Walpole. The lobbies of the House of Commons and all the adjacent places were crowded by proprietors of the short annuities and other redeemable popular deeds; men and women who, as the contemporary accounts tell us, "in a rude and insolent manner demanded justice of the members as they went into the House," and put into their hands a paper with the words written on it, "Pray do justice to the annuitants who lent their money on Parliamentary security." "The noisy multitude," we are told, "were particularly rude to Mr. Comptroller, tearing part of his coat as he passed by." The Speaker of the House was informed that a crowd of people had got together in a riotous and tumultuous manner in the lobbies and passages, and he ordered "that the Justices of the Peace for the City of Westminster do immediately attend this House, and bring

the constables with them." While the Justices and the constables were being sent for, Sir John Ward was presenting to the House a petition from the proprietors of the redeemable funds, setting forth that they had lent their money to the South Sea Company on Parliamentary security; that they had been unwarily drawn into subscribing for the shares in the company by the artifices of the directors; and they prayed that they might be heard by themselves or their counsel against Walpole's measure—the Bill "for making several provisions to restore the public credit, which suffers by the frauds and mismanagement of the late South Sea directors and others." Walpole opposed the petition, and said he did not see how the petitioners could be relieved, seeing that the resolutions, in pursuance of which his Bill was brought in, had been approved by the King and Council, and by a great majority of the House. Walpole, therefore, moved that the debate be adjourned, in order to get rid of the matter. The motion was carried by seventy-eight voices against twenty-nine. By this time four Justices for the City of Westminster had arrived, and were brought to the bar of the House. The Speaker informed them that there was a great crowd of riotous people in the lobbies and passages, and that he was commanded by the House to direct them to go and disperse the crowd, and take care to prevent similar riots in the future. The four Justices, attended by five or six constables, desired the petitioners to clear the lobbies; and when they refused to do so, caused a proclamation against rioters to be twice read, warning them at the same time that if they remained until the third reading, they would have to incur the penalties of the Act. What the penalties of the Act were, and what the four Justices and five or six constables could have done with the petitioners if the petitioners had refused to listen to reason, do not seem very clear. The petitioners, however, did listen to reason, and dispersed before the fatal third reading of the proclamation. But they did not disperse without giving the House of Commons and the Justices a piece of their mind. Many exclaimed that they had come as peaceable citizens and subjects to represent their grievances, and had

not expected to be used like a mob and scoundrels ; and others, as they went out, shouted to the members of Parliament, "You first pick our pockets, and then send us to gaol for complaining."

The Bill went up to the House of Lords on Monday, August 7, and the Lords agreed to it without an amendment. On Thursday, August 10, Parliament was prorogued. The Lord Chancellor read the King's speech. "The common calamity," said his Majesty, "occasioned by the wicked execution of the South Sea scheme, was become so very great before your meeting, that the providing proper remedies for it was very difficult. But it is a great comfort to me to observe that public credit now begins to recover, which gives me the greatest hopes that it will be entirely restored when all the provisions you have made for that end shall be duly put in execution." The speech went on to tell of his Majesty's "great compassion for the sufferings of the innocent and a just indignation against the guilty"; and added that the King had readily given his assent "to such Bills as you have presented to me for punishing the authors of our late misfortunes, and for obtaining the restitution and satisfaction due to those who have been injured by them in such manner as you judged proper." Certainly there was no lack of severity in the punishment inflicted on the fraudulent directors. Their estates were confiscated with such rigour that some of them were reduced to miserable poverty. They were disqualified from ever holding any public place or office whatever, and from ever having a seat in Parliament. Yet, severely as they were punished, the outcry of the public at the time was that they had been let off far too easily. Walpole was denounced because he did not carry their punishment much farther. There was even a ridiculous report spread abroad that he had defended Sunderland and screened the directors from the most ignoble and sordid motives, and that he had been handsomely paid for his compromise with crime. Nothing would have satisfied some of the sufferers by the South Sea scheme short of the execution of its principal directors. Even the scaffold, however, could hardly have dealt more stern and summary



justice on the criminals—as some of them undoubtedly were—than did the actual course of events. When the storm cleared away Aislachie was ruined ; Craggs, the Postmaster-General, was dead ; Craggs, the Secretary of State, was dead ; Lord Stanhope, who was really innocent—was really unsuspected of any share in the crimes of the fraudulent directors—was dead also ; Sunderland was no longer a Minister of State, and the shadow of death was already on him. It was not merely the bursting of a bubble ; it was the bursting of a shell—it mutilated or killed those who stood around and near.

By the time of the new elections—for Parliament had now nearly run its course—public tranquillity was entirely restored. Parliament was dissolved in March 1722, and the new elections left Walpole and his friends in power, with an immense majority at their back. Long before the new Parliament had time to assemble Lord Sunderland suddenly died of heart disease. On April 19, 1722, his death took place, and it was so unexpected that a wild outcry was raised by some of his friends, who insisted that his enemies had poisoned him. The medical examination proved, however, that Sunderland's disease was one which might at any moment of excitement have brought on his death. Nearly all the leading public men who, innocent or guilty, had been mixed up with the evil schemes of the South Sea Company were now in the grave.

The field seemed now clear and open to Walpole. The death of Sunderland, followed so soon on that of Stanhope, had left him apparently without a rival. Sunderland had been to the last a political, and even a personal, enemy of Walpole. Although Walpole had gone so far to protect Sunderland against the House of Commons and against public opinion, with regard to his share in the South Sea Company's transactions, Sunderland could not forgive Walpole because Walpole was rising higher in the State—because he was, in fact, the greater man. Though Sunderland was compelled by public opinion to resign office, he had contrived, up to the hour of his death, to maintain his influence over the mind of King George. Fortunately for George, the King had too much clear,

robust good sense not to recognise the priceless worth of Walpole's advice and Walpole's services. Sunderland tried one ingenious artifice to get rid of Walpole. He suggested to George that Walpole's merits required some special and permanent recognition, and he recommended that the King should create Walpole Postmaster-General for life. Such an office, indeed, would have brought Walpole an ample revenue, supposing he stood in need of money, which he did not, but it would have disqualified him for ever for a seat in Parliament. Perhaps no better illustration of Sunderland's narrow intellect and utter lack of judgment could be found than the supposition that this shallow trick could succeed, and that the greatest administrator of his time could be thus quietly withdrawn from Parliamentary life and from the higher work of the State, and shelved in perpetuity as a Postmaster-General. King George was not to be taken in after this fashion. He asked Sunderland whether Walpole wished for such an office, or was acquainted with Sunderland's intention to make the suggestion. Sunderland had to answer both questions in the negative. "Then," said the King, "pray do not make him any such offer, or say anything about it to him. I had to part with him once, much against my will, and, so long as he is willing to serve me, I will never part with him again." This incident shows that, if Sunderland had lived, he would have plotted against Walpole to the end, and would have stood in Walpole's way to the best of his power, with all the unforgiving hostility of the narrow-minded and selfish man who has had services rendered him for which he ought to feel grateful, but cannot.

A far greater man than Sunderland was soon to pass away.

From Marlborough's eyes the streams of dotage flow.

These are the famous words in which Johnson depicts the miserable decay of a great spirit, and points anew the melancholy moral of the vanity of human wishes. Hardly a line in the poetry of our language is better known or more often quoted. Where did Johnson get the idea that

Marlborough had sunk into dotage before his death? There is not the slightest foundation for such a belief. All that we know of Marlborough's closing days tells us the contrary. Nothing in Marlborough's life, not even his serene disregard of dangers and difficulties, not even his victories, became him like to the leaving of it. No great man ever sank more gracefully, more gently, with a calmer spirit, down to his rest. We get some charming pictures of Marlborough's closing days. Death had given him warning by repeated paralytic strokes. On November 27, 1721, he was seen for the last time in the House of Lords. He was not, however, quite near his death even then. He used to spend his time at Blenheim, or at his lodge in Windsor. To the last he was fond of riding and driving and the fresh country air. Indoors he loved to be surrounded by his granddaughters and their young friends, and to join in games of cards and other amusements with them. They used to get up private theatricals to gratify the gentle old warrior. We hear of a version of Dryden's "All for Love" being thus performed. The Duchess of Marlborough had cut out of the play its unseemly passages, and even its too amorous expressions—the reader will probably think there was not much left of the piece when this work of purification had been accomplished—and she would not allow any embracing to be performed. The gentleman who played Mark Antony wore a sword which had been presented to Marlborough by the Emperor. The part of the high priest was played by a pretty girl, a friend of Marlborough's granddaughters, and she wore as high priest's robe what seems to have been a lady's night-dress gorgeously embroidered with special devices for the occasion. A prologue, written by Dr. Hoadly, was read, in which the glories of the great Duke's career were glowingly recounted. Some painter, it seems to us, might make a pretty picture of this: the great hall in Blenheim turned into a theatre, the handsome young men and pretty girls enacting their chastened parts, the fading old hero looking at the scene with pleased and kindly eyes, and the imperious, loving old Duchess turning her devoted gaze on him.

So fades, so languishes, grows dim, and dies the con-



queror of Blenheim, the greatest soldier England ever had since the days when kings ceased to be as a matter of right her chiefs in command. In the early days of June 1722 Marlborough was stricken by another paralytic seizure, and this was his last. He was in full possession of his senses to the end, perfectly conscious and calm. He knew that he was dying; he had prayers read to him; he conveyed in many tender ways his feelings of affection for his wife, and of hope for his own future. At four in the morning of June 16 his life ebbed quietly away. He was in his seventy-second year when he died. None of the great deeds of his life belong to this history; none of that life's worst offences have much to do with it. Marlborough's career seems to us absolutely faultless in two of its aspects: as a commander and as a husband we can only give him praise. He was probably a greater commander than even the Duke of Wellington. If he never had to encounter a Napoleon, he had to meet and triumph over difficulties which never came in Wellington's way. It was not Wellington's fate to have to strive against political treachery of the basest kind on the part of English Ministers of State. Wellington's enemies were all in the field arrayed against him; Marlborough had to fight the foreign enemy on the battle-field, and to struggle meanwhile against the persistent treachery of the still more formidable enemy at home in the council chamber of his own Sovereign. Perhaps, indeed, Wellington's nature would not have permitted him to succeed under such difficulties. Wellington could hardly have met craft with craft, and, it must be added, falsehood with falsehood, as Marlborough did. We have said in this book already that even for that age of double-dealing Marlborough was a surprising double-dealer, and there were many passages in his career which are evidences of an astounding capacity for deceit. "He was a great man," Bolingbroke is reported to have said, "and I have forgotten his faults." Historians would gladly do the same if they could; would surely dwell with much more delight on the virtues and the greatness than on the defects. The English people were generous to Marlborough, and in the way which, it has to be confessed, was most welcome to

him. But if a very treasure-house of gold could not have satisfied his love of money, let it be added that the national treasure-house itself, were it poured out at his feet, could not have over-paid the services which he had rendered to his country.

Marlborough left no son to inherit his honours and his fortune. His titles and estates descended to his eldest daughter, the Countess of Godolphin. She died without leaving a son, and the titles and estates passed over to the Earl of Sunderland, the son and heir of Marlborough's second daughter, at that time long dead. From the day when the victor of Blenheim died, there has been no Duke of Marlborough distinguished in anything but the name. Not one of the world's great soldiers, it would seem, was destined to have a great soldier for a son. From great statesman fathers sometimes spring great statesman sons; but Alexander, Hannibal, Julius Cæsar, Charles the Twelfth, Alexander Farnese, Clive, Marlborough, Frederick, Napoleon, Wellington, Washington, left to the world no heir of their greatness.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE BANISHMENT OF ATTERBURY

ON Thursday, August 9, 1722, the "pompous solemnity" of Marlborough's funeral took place. The great procession went from the Duke's house in St. James's Park, through St. James's and the Upper Park to Hyde Park Corner, and thence through Piccadilly, St. James's Street, Pall Mall, Charing Cross, and King Street to Westminster Abbey. A small army of soldiers guarded the remains of the greatest warrior of his age; a whole heralds' college clustered about the lofty funeral banner on which all the arms of the Churchills were quartered. Marlborough's friends and admirers, his old brothers in arms, the companions of his victories, followed his coffin, and listened while Garter King-at-Arms, bending over the open grave,

said: "Thus it hath pleased Almighty God to take out of this transitory life unto His mercy the most high, most mighty, and most noble prince, John Churchill, Duke and Earl of Marlborough."

In Applebee's "Weekly Journal" for Saturday, August 11, two days after the funeral, we are told that the Duchess of Marlborough, in honour of the memory of her life-long lover, had offered a prize of five hundred pounds for a Latin epitaph to be inscribed upon his tomb, and that "several poets have already taken to their lofty studies to contend for the prize."

At Marlborough's funeral we see for the last time in high public estate one of the few Englishmen of the day who could properly be named in the same breath with Marlborough. This was Francis Atterbury, the eloquent and daring Bishop of Rochester. Atterbury came up to town for the purpose of officiating at the funeral of the great Duke. On July 30, 1722, he wrote from the country to his friend Pope, announcing his visit to London. "I go to-morrow," Atterbury writes, "to the Deanery, and I believe I shall stay there till I have said dust to dust, and shut up this last scene of pompous vanity." Atterbury does not seem to have been profoundly impressed with the religious solemnity of the occasion. His was not a very reverential spirit. There was as little of the temper of pious sanctity in Atterbury as in Swift himself. The allusion to the last scene of pompous vanity might have had another significance, as well as that which Atterbury meant to give to it. Amid the pomp in which Marlborough's career went out the career of Atterbury went out as well, although in a different way, and not closed sublimely by death. After the funeral, Atterbury went to the Deanery at Westminster—he was Dean of Westminster as well as Bishop of Rochester—and there, on August 24, he was arrested by the Under-Secretary of State, accompanied by two officers of justice, and was brought, along with all papers of his which the officers could seize, before the Privy Council. He underwent an examination, as the result of which he was committed to the Tower, on a charge of having been concerned in a treasonable con-



spiracy to dethrone the King, and to bring back the House of Stuart. In the Tower he was left to languish for many a long day before it was found convenient to bring him to trial.

England was startled by the disclosures which followed Atterbury's arrest. On Tuesday, October 9, 1722, the sixth Parliament of Great Britain—the sixth, that is to say, since the union with Scotland—met at Westminster. The House of Commons, on the motion of Mr. Pulteney, elected Mr. Spencer Compton their Speaker, and on the next day but one, October 11, the royal speech was read. The King was present in person, but the speech was read by the Lord Chancellor, for the good reason which we have already mentioned, that his Majesty the King of England could not speak the English language. The speech opened with a startling announcement. “My Lords and Gentlemen,” so ran the words of the Sovereign, “I am concerned to find myself obliged, at the opening of this Parliament, to acquaint you that a dangerous conspiracy has been for some time formed, and is still carrying on, against my person and government, in favour of a Popish pretender.” “Some of the conspirators,” the speech went on to say, “have been taken up and secured, and endeavours are used for the apprehending others.” When the speech was read, and the King had left the House, the Duke of Grafton, then Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, brought in a Bill for suspending the Habeas Corpus Act, and empowering the government to secure and detain “such persons as his Majesty shall suspect are conspiring against his person and government, for the space of one year.” The motion to read the Bill a second time in the same sitting was strenuously resisted by a considerable minority of the Peers. A warm debate took place, and in the end the second reading was carried by a majority of 67 against 24. The debate was renewed upon the other stages of the Bill, which were taken in rapid succession. The proposal of the Government was, of course, carried in the end; but it met with a resistance in the House of Lords which certainly would not have been offered to such a proposal by any member of the hereditary chamber in our day. Some of the recorded protests of

dissentient peers read more like the utterances of modern Radicals than those of influential members of the House of Lords. The strongest objection made to the proposal was that the utmost term for which the Constitution had previously been suspended was six months, and that the measure to suspend it for a year would become an authority for suspending it at some future time for two years, or three years, or any term which might please the Ministers in power. On Monday, October 15, the Bill was brought down to the Commons, and was read a first time on the motion of Walpole. The Bill was passed in the Commons, not, indeed, without opposition, but with an opposition much less strenuous and influential than that which had been offered to it in the House of Lords. On October 17 it was announced to Parliament that Dr. Atterbury, the Bishop of Rochester, Lord North and Grey, and the Earl of Orrery, had been committed to the Tower on a charge of high treason. A few days after, a similar announcement was made about the arrest and committal of the Duke of Norfolk.

By far the most important of the persons committed for trial was the Bishop of Rochester. Francis Atterbury may rank among the most conspicuous public men of his time. He stands only just beneath Marlborough, and Bolingbroke, and Walpole. Steele, in his sixty-sixth "Tatler," pays a high tribute to Atterbury: "He has so much regard to his congregation, that he commits to memory what he has to say to them, and has so soft and graceful a behaviour, that it must attract your attention. His person, it is to be confessed, is no slight recommendation; but he is to be highly commended for not losing that advantage, and adding to a propriety of speech which might pass the criticism of Longinus an action which would have been approved by Demosthenes. He has a peculiar force in his way, and has many of his audience who could not be intelligent hearers of his discourse were there not explanation as well as grace in his action. This art of his is used with the most exact and honest skill; he never attempts your passions until he has convinced your reason; all the objections which he can form are laid open and dispersed

before he uses the least vehemence in his sermon ; but when he thinks he has your head he very soon wins your heart, and never pretends to show the beauty of holiness until he hath convinced you of the truth of it."

Atterbury had, however, among his many gifts a dangerous gift of political intrigue. Like Swift, and Dubois, and Alberoni, he was at least as much statesman as churchman. He had mixed himself up in various intrigues—some of them could hardly be called conspiracies—for the restoration of the Stuarts, and when at last something like a new conspiracy was planned, it was not likely that he would be left out of it. He had courage enough for any such scheme. There was no great difficulty in finding out the new plot which King George mentioned in his speech to Parliament ; for James Stuart had revealed it himself by a proclamation which he caused to be circulated among his supposed adherents in England, renewing in the boldest terms his claim to the crown of England. A sort of junto of Jacobites appears to have been established in England to make arrangements for a new attempt on the part of James ; the noblemen whom King George had arrested were understood to be among its leading members. Atterbury was charged with having taken a prominent if not, indeed, a foremost part in the conspiracy. The Duke of Norfolk, Lord North and Grey, and Lord Orrery were afterwards discharged for want of evidence to convict them. The arrest of a number of humbler conspirators led to the discovery of a correspondence asserted to have been carried on between Atterbury and the adherents of James Stuart in France and Italy.

Both Houses of Parliament began by voting addresses of loyalty and gratitude to the King, and by resolving that the proclamation entitled "Declaration of James the Third, King of England, Scotland, and Ireland, to all his loving subjects of the three nations," and signed "James Rex," was "a false, insolent, and traitorous libel," and should be burnt by the hands of the common hangman under the direction of the sheriffs of London. This important ceremonial was duly carried out at the Royal Exchange. Then the House of Commons voted, "that towards raising the



supply, and reimbursing to the public the great expenses occasioned by the late rebellions and disorders, the sum of one hundred thousand pounds be raised and levied upon the real and personal estates of all Papists, Popish recusants, or persons educated in the Popish religion, or whose parents are Papists, or who shall profess the Popish religion, in lieu of all forfeitures already incurred for or upon account of their recusancy." This singular method of infusing loyalty into the Roman Catholics of England was not allowed to be adopted without serious and powerful resistance in the House of Commons. The idea was not to devise a new penalty for the Catholics, but to put in actual operation the terms of a former penalty pronounced against them in Elizabeth's time, and not then pressed into execution. This fact was dwelt upon with much emphasis by the advocates of the penal motion. Why talk of religious persecution? they asked. This is not religious persecution; it is only putting in force an edict passed in a former reign to punish Roman Catholics for political rebellion. This way of putting the case seems only to make the character of the policy more clear and less justifiable. The Catholics of King George's time were to be mulcted indiscriminately because the Catholics of Queen Elizabeth's time had been declared liable to such a penalty. The Master of the Rolls, to his great credit, strongly opposed the resolution. Walpole supported it with all the weight of his argument and his influence. The plot was evidently a Popish plot, he contended, and although he was not prepared to accuse any English Catholic in particular of taking part in it, yet there could be no doubt that Papists in general were well-wishers to it, and that some of them had contributed large sums towards it. Why, then, should they not be made to reimburse some part of the expense to which they and the friends of the Pretender had put the nation? The resolution, after it had been reported from committee, was only carried in the whole House by 188 votes against 172. The resolution was embodied in a Bill, and the Bill, when it went up to the House of Lords, was opposed there by several of the peers, and especially by Lord Cowper, the

"silver-tongued Cowper," who had been so distinguished a Lord Chancellor under Anne, and under George himself. Lord Cowper's was an eloquent and a powerful speech. It tore to pieces the wretched web of flimsy sophistry by which the supporters of the Bill endeavoured to make out that it was not a measure of religious persecution. Indeed, there were some of these who insisted that, so far from being a measure of persecution, it was a measure of relief. Our readers will, no doubt, be curious to know how this bold position was sustained. In this wise: the penalties prescribed for the Catholics in Elizabeth's reign were much greater in amount than those which the Bill proposed to inflict on the Catholics of King George's time; therefore the Bill was an indulgence and not a persecution—a mitigation of penalty, not a punishment. Let us reduce the argument to plain figures. A Catholic in the reign of Elizabeth is declared liable to a penalty of twenty pounds; but out of considerations of humanity or justice the penalty is not enforced. The descendant and heir of that same Catholic in the reign of George the First is fined fifteen pounds, and the fine is exacted. He complains, and he is told, "You have no right to complain; you ought to be grateful; the original fine ordained was twenty pounds; you have been let off five pounds—you have been favoured by an act of indulgence, not victimised by an act of persecution." Lord Cowper had not much trouble in disposing of arguments of this kind, but his speech took a wider range, and is indeed a masterly exposure of the whole principle on which the measure was founded. On May 22, 1723, sixty-nine peers voted for the third reading of the Bill, and fifty-five opposed it. Lord Cowper, with twenty other peers, entered a protest against the decision of the House, according to a practice then common in the House of Lords, which has lately fallen into complete disuse. The recorded protests of dissentient peers form, we may observe, very important historical documents, and deserve, some of them, a careful study. Lord Cowper's protest was the last public act of his useful and honourable career. He died on the 10th of October in the same year, 1723. Some of his enemies explained his action on the

anti-Papist Bill by the assertion that he was a Jacobite at heart. Even if he had been, the fact would hardly have made his conduct less creditable and spirited. Many a man who was a Jacobite at heart would have supported a measure for the punishment of Roman Catholics if only to save himself from the suspicion of sympathy with the lost cause.

This, however, was but an episode in the story of the Jacobite plot and the measures taken to punish those who were engaged in it. Committees of secrecy were appointed by Parliament to enquire into the evidence and examine witnesses.

Meantime both Houses of Parliament kept voting address after address to the Crown at each new stage of the proceedings, and as each fresh evidence of the conspiracy was laid before them. The King must have grown rather weary of finding new words of gratitude, and the Houses of Parliament, one would think, must have grown tired of inventing new phrases of loyalty and fresh expressions of horror at the wickedness of the Jacobites. The horror was not quite genuine on the part of some who thus proclaimed it. Many of those who voted the addresses would gladly have welcomed a restoration of the Stuarts. Not the most devoted adherent of King George could really have felt any surprise at the persistent efforts of the Jacobite partisans. Eight years before this it was a mere toss-up whether Stuart or Hanover should succeed, and even still it was not quite certain whether, if the machinery of the modern *plébiscite* could have been put into operation in England, the majority would not have been found in sympathy with Atterbury. It is almost certain that if the *plébiscite* could have been taken in Ireland and Scotland also, a majority of voices would have voted James Stuart to the throne.

It was resolved to proceed against Atterbury by a Bill of Pains and Penalties to be brought into Parliament. The evidence against him was certainly not such as any criminal court would have held to justify a conviction. A young barrister, named Christopher Layer, was arrested and examined ; so were a nonjuring minister named Kelly, an Irish Catholic priest called Neynoe, and a man named Plunkett, also from Ireland. The charge against Atterbury was founded on the statements obtained or extorted



from these men. It should be said that Layer gave evidence which actually seemed to impugn Lord Cowper himself as a member of a club of disaffected persons; and when Lord Cowper indignantly repudiated the charge and demanded an enquiry, the Government declared enquiry absolutely unnecessary, as everybody was well assured of his innocence. The Government, however, declined to follow Lord Cowper in his not unreasonable assumption that the whole story was unworthy of explicit credence when it included such a false statement. The case against Atterbury rested on the declaration of some of the arrested men that the Bishop had carried on a correspondence with James Stuart, Lord Mar, and General Dillon (an Irish Catholic soldier, who after the capitulation of Limerick had entered the French service), through the instrumentality of Kelly, who acted as his secretary and amanuensis for that purpose. It was a case of circumstantial evidence altogether. The impartial reader of history now will feel well satisfied on two points—first, that Atterbury was engaged in the plot; and second, that the evidence brought against him was not nearly strong enough to sustain a conviction. It was the case of Bolingbroke and Harley over again. We know now that the men had done the things charged against them, but the evidence then relied upon was utterly inadequate to sustain the charge.

A "Dialogue in Verse between a Whig and a Tory" was written by Swift in the year 1723, "concerning the horrid plot discovered by Harlequin, the Bishop of Rochester's French Dog." The Whig tells the Tory that the dog—

His name is Harlequin, I wot,  
And that's a name in every plot--

was generously

Resolved to save the British nation,  
Though French by birth and education;  
His correspondence plainly dated  
Was all deciphered and translated;  
His answers were exceeding pretty,  
Before the secret wise committee;  
Confessed as plain as he could bark,  
Then with his fore-foot set his mark.

There was more than mere fooling in the lines. The dog Harlequin was made to bear important evidence against the Bishop of Rochester. Atterbury had never resigned himself to the Hanoverian dynasty. He did not believe it would last, and he openly declaimed against it. He did more than this, however : he engaged in conspiracies for the restoration of James Stuart. Horace Walpole says of him that he was simply a Jacobite priest. He was a Jacobite priest who would gladly, if he could, have been a Jacobite soldier, and had given ample evidence of courage equal to such a part. He had been engaged in a long correspondence with Jacobite conspirators at home and abroad. The correspondence was carried on in cypher, and, of course, under feigned names. Atterbury appears to have been described now as Mr. Illington, and now as Mr. Jones. Atterbury refused to make any defence before the House of Commons ; but he appeared before the House of Lords on May 6, 1723, and defended himself, and made strong and eloquent protestation of his innocence. One of the witnesses whom he called in his defence was his friend Pope, who could only give evidence as to the manner in which the Bishop had passed his time when staying in the poet's house. Christopher Layer, Atterbury's associate in the general charge of conspiracy, was a young barrister of good family, a remarkably handsome, graceful, and accomplished man. One charge against him was that he had formed a plan to murder the King and carry off the Prince of Wales ; but the statements made against Layer must be taken with liberal allowance for the extravagance of loyal passion, panic, and exaggeration. Layer had escaped and was recaptured, was tried, found guilty, and sentenced to death. He was hanged at Tyburn on March 15, 1723 ; he met his death with calm courage. His body was quartered and his head was set on Temple Bar, from which it was presently blown down by the wind. Some one picked up the head and sold it to a surgeon. Neynoe, another of the accused men, contrived to escape from custody, got to the river, endeavoured to swim across it, and was drowned in the attempt.

The charges made against Atterbury had therefore some-

times to rest upon inferences drawn from confessions, or portions of confessions, averred to have dropped or been drawn from men whose lips were now closed by death. Those who defended Atterbury dwelt strongly on this fact, as was but natural. It is curious to notice how often in the debates of the Lords on the Bill of Pains and Penalties one noble peer accuses another of secret sympathy with Jacobite schemes. As regards Atterbury, the whole question was whether he was really the person described in the correspondence now as Jones and now as Illington. There might have been no evidence which even a "secret, wise" committee of that day would have cared to accept but for the fact that the Bishop's wife had received, or was to have received, from France a present of a dog called Harlequin, and that there was mention in the correspondence about poor Mr. Illington being in grief for the loss of his dog Harlequin. This allusion put the committee of secrecy on the track. The Bishop's wife had lately died, and it would seem from the correspondence that Illington's wife had died about the same time. Clearly, if it were once assumed that Illington and Atterbury were one and the same person, there was ample ground for suspicion, and even for a general belief that the story told was true in the main. The evidence was enough for Parliament at that time, and the Bill passed the House of Lords on May 16 by a majority of 83 votes to 43. Atterbury was deprived of all his offices and dignities, declared to be for ever incapable of holding any place or exercising any authority within the King's dominions, and condemned to perpetual banishment. He went to France in the first instance with his daughter and her husband. It so happened that Bolingbroke had just at that time obtained a sort of conditional pardon from the King; obtained it mainly by bribing the Duchess of Kendal. The two Jacobites crossed each other on the way, one going into exile, the other returning from it. "I am exchanged," was Atterbury's remark. "The nation," said Pope afterwards, "is afraid of being overrun with genius, and cannot regain one great man but at the expense of another." So far as this history is concerned we part with Atterbury here. He lived abroad until 1731, and after his



death his remains were brought back and privately laid in Westminster Abbey.

We have directed attention to the freedom and frequency of the accusations of Jacobitism made by one peer against another during the debates on Atterbury's case. The fact is worthy of note if only to show how uncertain, even still, was the foundation of the throne of Brunswick, and how wide-spread the sympathy with the lost cause was supposed to be. When Bolingbroke was allowed to return to England, some of Swift's friends instantly fancied that he must have purchased his permission by telling some tale against the Dean himself, among others, and long after this time we find Swift defending himself against the rumoured accusation of a share in Jacobite conspiracy. The condition of the public mind is well pictured in a description of two imaginary politicians in one of the successors to "The Tatler." "Tom Tempest" is described as a steady friend to the House of Stuart. He can recount the prodigies that have appeared in the sky, and the calamities that have afflicted the nation every year from the Revolution, and is of opinion that if the exiled family had continued to reign there would neither have been worms in our ships nor caterpillars in our trees. He firmly believes that King William burnt Whitehall that he might steal the furniture, and that Tillotson died an atheist. Of Queen Anne he speaks with more tenderness; owns that she meant well, and can tell by whom she was poisoned. Tom has always some new promise that we shall see in another month the rightful monarch on the throne. "Jack Sneaker," on the other hand, is a devoted adherent to the present establishment. He has known those who saw the bed in which the Pretender was conveyed in a warming-pan. He often rejoices that this nation was not enslaved by the Irish. He believes that King William never lost a battle, and that if he had lived one year longer he would have conquered France. Yet amid all this satisfaction he is hourly disturbed by dread of Popery; wonders that stricter laws are not made against the Papists, and is sometimes afraid that they are busy with French gold among our bishops and judges.

## CHAPTER XIV

## WALPOLE IN POWER AS WELL AS OFFICE

WALPOLE was now Prime Minister. The King wished to reward him for his services by conferring a peerage on him, but this honour Walpole steadily declined. One of his biographers says that his refusal "at first appears extraordinary." It ought not to appear extraordinary at first or at last. Walpole knew that the sceptre of government in England had passed to the House of Commons. He would have been unwise and inconsistent indeed if at his time of life he had consented to renounce the influence and the power which a seat in that House gave him for the comparative insignificance and obscurity of a seat in the House of Lords. He accepted a title for his eldest son, who was made Baron Walpole; but for himself he preferred to keep to the field in which he had won his name, and where he could make his influence and power felt all over the land.

We may anticipate the course of events, and say at once that hardly ever before in the history of English political life, and hardly ever since Walpole's time, has a Minister had so long a run of power. His long administration, as Mr. Green well says, is almost without a history. It is almost without a history, that is to say, in the ordinary sense of the word. For the most part, the steady movement of England's progress remains during long years and years undisturbed by any event of great dramatic interest at home or abroad. But the period of Walpole's long and successful administration was none the less a period of the highest importance in English history. It was a time of almost uninterrupted national development in the right direction, and almost unbroken national prosperity. The foreign policy of Walpole was, on the whole, no less sound and just than his policy at home. His first ambition was to keep England out of wars with foreign Powers. Yet his was not the ambition which some later statesmen, especially, for example, Mr. Bright, have owned—the

ambition to keep England free of any foreign policy whatever. Such an ambition was not Walpole's, and such an ambition at Walpole's time it would have been all but impossible to realise. Walpole knew well that there was no way of keeping England out of foreign wars at that season of political growth but by securing for her a commanding influence in Continental affairs. Such influence he set himself to establish, and he succeeded in establishing it by friendly and satisfactory alliances with France and other Powers. Turning back for a moment into the political affairs of a year or two previous, we may remark that one of the consequences of the Mississippi scheme, and the reign of Mr. Law in France, had been the recall of Lord Stair from the French Court, to which he was accredited as English Ambassador. Lord Stair quarrelled with Law when Law was all-powerful; and, in order to propitiate the financial dictator, it was found convenient to recall Stair from Paris. England had been well served by him as her Ambassador at the French Court. We have already said something of Lord Stair, his ability, courage, and dexterity, his winning ways, and his fearless spirit. John Dalrymple, second Earl of Stair, was one of the remarkable men of his time. He was a scholar and an orator, a soldier and a diplomatist. He had fought with conspicuous bravery and skill under William the Third, and under Marlborough. He appears to have combined a daring that looked like recklessness with a cool calculation which made it prudence. On Marlborough's fall, Lord Stair fell with him. He was deprived of all his public offices, and was plunged into a condition of something like poverty. When George the First came to the throne, Stair was taken into favour again, and, as a special tribute to his diplomatic capacity, was sent to represent England at the Court of France. There he displayed consummate sagacity, foresight, and firmness. He contrived to make himself acquainted beforehand with everything the Jacobites were doing. This, as may be seen by Bolingbroke's complaints, was easy enough at one time; but the adherents of James Stuart began after a while to learn prudence, and some of their enterprises were conducted up to a certain point with



much craft and caution. Lord Stair always contrived to get the information he wanted. Some of the arts by which he accomplished his purposes were not, perhaps, such as a great diplomatist of our time would have cared to practise. He bribed with liberal hand ; he kept persons of all kinds in his pay ; he bribed French officials, and even French Ministers ; he got to know all that was done in the most secret councils of the State. He used to go about the capital in disguise in order to find out what people were saying in the wine-shops and coffee-houses. Often, after he had entertained a brilliant company of guests at a state dinner, he would make some excuse to his friends for quitting them abruptly ; say that he had received despatches which required his instant attention, leave the company to be entertained by his wife, withdraw to his study, there quietly change his clothes, and then wander out on one of his nightly visitations of taverns and coffee-houses. He paid court to great ladies, flattered them, allowed them to win money at cards from him, and even made love to them, for the sake of getting some political secrets out of them. He had a noble and stately presence, a handsome face, and charming manners. He is said to have been the most polite and well-bred man of his time. It is of him the story is told about the test of good-breeding which the King of France applied and acknowledged. Louis the Fourteenth had heard it said that Stair was the best-bred man of his day. The King invited Stair to drive out with him. As they were about to enter the carriage the King signed to the English Ambassador to go first. Stair bowed and entered the carriage. "The world is right about Lord Stair," said the King ; "I never before saw a man who would not have troubled me with excuses and ceremony."

The French Government naturally feared that the recall of Lord Stair might be marked by a change in the friendly disposition of England. This fear became greater on the death of Stanhope. The English Government, however, took steps to reassure the Regent of France. Townshend himself wrote at once to Cardinal Dubois, promising to maintain, as before, a cordial friendship with the French Government. Walpole was entirely imbued with the in-

instincts of such a policy. The chief disturbing influence in Continental politics arose from the anxiety of Spain to recover Gibraltar and Minorca, and, in fact, to get back again all that had been taken from her by the Treaty of Utrecht. The territorial and other arrangements which concluded with the Treaty of Utrecht made themselves the central point of all the foreign policy of that time: these States were concerned to maintain the treaty; those were eager to break through its bonds. It holds in the politics of that day the place which was held by the Treaty of Vienna at a later period. There is always much of the hypocritical about the manner in which treaties of that highly artificial nature are made. No State really intends to hold by them any longer than she finds that they serve her own interests. If they are imposed upon a State and are injurious to her, that State never means to submit to them any longer than she is actually under compulsion. New means and impulses to break away from such bonds are given to those inclined that way in the fact that the arrangements are usually made without the slightest concern for the populations of the countries concerned, but only for dynastic or other political considerations. The pride of the Spanish people was so much hurt by some of the conditions of the Treaty of Utrecht that a Spanish Sovereign or Minister would always be popular who could point to his people a way to escape from its bonds or to rend them in pieces. Spain therefore was always looking out for new alliances. She saw at one time a fresh chance for trying her policy, and she held out every inducement in her power to the Emperor Charles the Sixth and to Russia to enter into a combination against France and England. The Emperor was without a son, and, in consequence, had issued his famous Pragmatic Sanction, providing that his hereditary dominions in Austria, Hungary, and Bohemia should descend to his daughter Maria Theresa. The great Powers of Europe had not as yet seen fit to guarantee, or even recognise, this succession. Spain held out the temptation to the Emperor of her own guarantee to the Pragmatic Sanction and of several important concessions in the matter of trade and commerce to Austria, on consideration that

the Emperor should assist Spain to recover her lost territory. Catherine, the wife of Peter the Great, was now governing Russia, and was entering into secret negotiations with Spain and with the Emperor. Townshend and Walpole understood all that was going on, and succeeded in making a defensive treaty between England, France, and Prussia. Prussia, to be sure, did not long hold to the treaty, and her withdrawal gave a new stimulus to the machinations of the Emperor and of Philip of Spain, and in 1727 Philip actually ventured to lay siege to Gibraltar. England, France, and Holland, however, held firmly together; the Russian Empress suddenly died, the Emperor Charles was not inclined to risk much, and Spain finally had to come to terms with England and her allies.

These troubles might have proved serious but for the determined policy of Townshend and of Walpole. We have not thought it necessary to weary our readers with the details of this little running fire of dispute which was kept up for some years between England and Spain. We saw in an earlier chapter how the quarrel began and what the elements were which fed it and kept it burning. This latter passage is really only a continuation of the former; both, except for the sake of mere continuity of historic narrative, might have been told as one story, and, indeed, would perhaps not have required many sentences for the telling. Walpole applied himself at home to the work of what has since been called Peace, Retrenchment, and Reform. He was the first great English finance Minister; perhaps we may say he was the first English Minister who ever sincerely regarded the development of national prosperity, the just and equal distribution of taxation, and the lightening of the load of financial burdens, as the most important business of a statesman. The whole political and social conditions of the country were changing under his wise and beneficent system of administration. Population was steadily increasing; some of the great rising towns had doubled their numbers since Walpole's career began. Agriculture was better in its systems, and was brightening the face of the country everywhere; the farmer had almost ceased for the time to grumble; the labourer was well fed,



and not too heavily worked. We do not mean to say that Walpole's administration was the one cause of all this improvement in town and country; but most assuredly the peace, and the security of peace, which Walpole's administration conferred was of direct and material influence in the growing prosperity of the nation. His financial systems lightened the burdens of taxation, distributed the load more equally everywhere, and enabled the State to get the best revenue possible at the lowest cost and with the least effort. It might almost be said that Walpole anticipated free trade. The royal speech from the Throne at the opening of Parliament on October 19, 1721, declared it to be "very obvious that nothing would more conduce to the obtaining so public a good"—the extension of our commerce—"than to make the exportation of our own manufactures, and the importation of the commodities used in the manufacturing of them, as practicable and as easy as may be; by this means the balance of trade may be preserved in our favour, our navigation increased, and greater numbers of our poor employed." "I must therefore," the speech went on, "recommend it to you, gentlemen of the House of Commons, to consider how far the duties upon these branches may be taken off and replaced, without any violation of public faith or laying any new burden upon my people. And I promise myself that, by a due consideration of this matter, the produce of those duties, compared with the infinite advantages that will accrue to the kingdom by their being taken off, will be found so inconsiderable as to leave little room for any difficulties or objections." In furtherance of the policy indicated in these passages of the royal speech, more than one hundred articles of British manufacture were allowed to be exported free of duty, while some forty articles of raw material were allowed to be imported in the same manner. Walpole was anxious to make a full use of this system of indirect taxation. He desired to levy and collect taxes in such a manner as to avoid the losses imposed upon the revenue by smuggling and by various forms of fraud. His principle was that the necessaries of life and the raw materials from which our manufactures were to be

made ought to remain, as far as possible, free of taxation. The whole history of our financial systems since Walpole's time has been a history of the gradual development of his economic principles. There has been, of course, reaction now and then, and sometimes the counsels of statesmen appear for a while to have been under the absolute domination of the policy which he strove to supplant. But the reaction has only been for seasons, while the progress of Walpole's policy has been steady. We have since nearly accomplished the financial task Walpole would, if he could, have accomplished in the reign of George the First.

No one can deny that Walpole was an unscrupulous Minister. He would gladly have carried out the best policy by the best means; but where this was not practicable or convenient he was perfectly willing to carry out a noble policy by the vilest methods. He was not himself avaricious; he was not open to the temptations of money. He had a fortune large enough for him, and he spent it freely; but he was willing to bribe and corrupt all those of whom he could make any use. Under his rule corruption became a settled parliamentary system. He had done more than any other man to make the House of Commons the most powerful factor in the government of England. He had therefore made a seat in the House of Commons an object of the highest ambition. To sit in that House made the obscurest country gentleman a power in the State. Naturally, therefore, a seat in the House of Commons was struggled for, scrambled for, fought for—obtained at any cost of money, influence, time, and temper. Naturally also a seat thus obtained was a possession through which recompense of some kind was expected. Those who buy their seats expect to sell their votes; at least that was so in the days of Walpole. In times nearer to our own England has seen a condition of things in which public opinion and the development of a sort of national conscience absolutely prevented members from taking bribes, although it allowed them the most liberal use of bribery and corruption in the obtaining of their seats. The member of Parliament who, before the first Reform Act, would have bought his seat by means of the most unblushing and

shameless corruption, would no more have thought of selling his vote to a Minister for a money payment than he would have thought of selling his wife at Smithfield. But in Walpole's time the man who bought his seat was ready to sell his vote. Walpole, the Minister, was willing to buy the vote of any man who would sell it. He was lavish in the gift of lucrative offices, of rich sinecures, of pensions, and even of bribes in a lump sum, money down. He would bribe a member's wife, if that were more convenient than openly to bribe the member himself. He had no particular choice as to whether the bribe should be direct or indirect, open or secret; he wanted to get the vote, he was willing to pay the price, and he cared not who knew of the arrangement. We have already mentioned that the saying ascribed to him about every man having his price was never uttered by him. What he said probably was, that "each of these men," alluding to a certain group or party, had his price. He is reported to have said that he never knew any woman who would not take money, except one noble lady, whom he named, and she, he said, took diamonds. He acted consistently, and was not ashamed. He was incorrupt himself; he was even in that sense incorruptible; but in order to gain his own public purposes, wise and just as they were, he was willing to corrupt a whole House of Commons, and would not have shrunk from corrupting a nation.

It ought to be pointed out that the very pacific nature of Walpole's policy and the security and steadiness of his administration made it sometimes all the more necessary for him to have recourse to questionable methods. Great controversies of imperial or national interest—controversies which stir the hearts of men, which appeal to their principles and awaken their passions—did not often arise during his long tenure of power. Agitations of this kind, whatever trouble and disturbance they may bring with them, have a purifying effect upon the political atmosphere. Only a very ignoble creature is to be bribed out of his opinions when some interest is at stake on which his heart, his training, and his associations have already taught him to take sides. Walpole kept the nation out of such con-



troversies for the most part. and one result was that small political combinations of various kinds were free to form themselves around him, beneath him, and against him. The House of Commons sometimes threatened to dissolve itself into a number of little separate sections or factions, none of them representing any real principle or having more than a temporary attraction of cohesion. Walpole was again and again placed in the position of having to encounter some little faction of this kind by open exercise of power or by the process of corruption, and he usually found the latter course more convenient and ready. Nor could such a man at any period of English history have remained long without more or less formidable rivals. Walpole himself must have known well enough that the death of men like Sunderland, or the death of any number of men, could not, so long as England was herself, secure him for long an undisturbed political field with no head raised against him. A country like this is never so barren of political intellect and courage as to admit of a long dictatorship in political life.

Walpole had already one rising rival in the person of Lord Carteret, afterwards Earl of Granville. John Carteret was born April 22, 1690, and was only five years old when the death of his father, the first Lord Carteret, made him a member of the House of Lords. He distinguished himself greatly at Oxford, and entered very early into public life. He was from the beginning a favourite of George the First, and by the influence of Stanhope was entrusted with various diplomatic missions of more or less importance. In 1721 he was actually appointed Ambassador to the Court of France. The death of Craggs, the Secretary of State, however, made a vacancy in the Administration, and the place was at once assigned to Carteret. Carteret was one of those men whose genius we have to believe in rather on the faith of contemporary judgment than by reason of any track of its own it has left behind. The unanimous opinion of all who knew him, and more especially of those who were commonly brought into contact with him, was that Carteret possessed the rarest combination of statesmanlike and literary gifts. Probably no English public man ever

exhibited in a higher degree the qualities that bring success in politics and the qualities that bring success in literature. It seems strange to have to say this when one remembers a man like Bolingbroke and a man like Burke ; but it is certain that neither Bolingbroke nor Burke could boast of such scholarship and accomplishments as those of Carteret. He was a profound classical scholar ; he was a master of French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, German, and Swedish. His scientific knowledge was extraordinary for that day ; he was a close student of the history of past and passing time ; he was deeply interested in constitutional law, and had a passion for Church history. He was a great parliamentary debater—some say he was even a great orator. He was prompt and bold in his decisions ; he was not afraid of any enterprise ; he was not depressed or abashed by failure ; he could take fortune's buffets and rewards with equal thanks. Large brains and small affections are, according to Mr. Disraeli, the essential qualities for success in public life. Carteret had large brains and small affections ; he had no friendships and no enmities. Like Fox, he was a bad hater, but, unlike Fox, he had not a heart to love. He was fond of books, and of wine, and of women ; he was a great drinker of wine, even for those days of deep drink. Beneath all the apparent energy and daring of his character there lay a voluptuous love of ease and languor. He was not a lazy man, but his inclination was always to be an indolent man. He leaped up to sudden political action when the call came, like Sardanapalus leaping up to the inevitable fight ; but, like Sardanapalus, he would have been always glad to lie down again and loll in ease the moment the necessity for action had passed away. No doubt his daily allowance of Burgundy—a very liberal and generous allowance—had a good deal to do with his tendency to indolence. Whatever the reason, it is certain that, with all his magnificent gifts and his splendid chances, he did nothing great, and has left no abiding mark in history. Every one who came near him seems to have regarded him as a master spirit. Chesterfield said of him, "When he dies the ablest head in England dies too, take it for all in all." Horace Walpole declares him to be superior in

one set of qualities to his father, Sir Robert Walpole, and in others to the great Lord Chatham. "Why did they send you here?" Swift said to Carteret with rough good humour when Carteret came over to Dublin to be Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. "You are not fit for this place; let them send us back our boobies." Carteret's fame has always seemed to us like the fame of Sheridan's Begum speech. Such poor records as we have of that speech seem hardly to hint at any extraordinary eloquence; yet the absolutely unanimous opinion of all who heard it—of all the orators and statesmen and critics of the time—was that so great a speech had never before been spoken in Parliament. These men cannot have been all wrong, one would think; and yet it is not easy to believe that those who made such record of the speech as we have can have purposely left out all the eloquence, the wit, and the argument. In like manner, readers of this day may perplex themselves about the fame of Carteret. All the men who knew him can hardly have been mistaken when they concurred in giving him credit for surpassing genius; and yet we find no evidence of that genius either in the literature or the political history of England.

Carteret had one great advantage over Walpole and over all his contemporaries in political life. He was able to speak German fluently: he was able to talk for hours with the King in the King's own guttural tongue. The King clung to Carteret's companionship because of his German. While Walpole was trying to instil his policy and counsels into George's mind through the non-conducting medium of very bad Latin, while other Ministers were endeavouring to approach the royal intelligence by means of French which they spoke badly and he understood imperfectly, Carteret could rattle away in idiomatic German, and could amuse the royal humour even with voluble German slang. Carteret had come into public life under the influence of Lord Sunderland and Lord Stanhope, and he regarded himself as the successor to their policy. He never considered himself as quite in understanding and harmony with Townshend and Walpole. His principal idea was that the time had passed when it was proper or expedient to exclude the



Tories or the High Churchmen from the political service of the Crown. He desired to enlarge the basis of administration by admitting some of the more plastic and progressive of the Tories to a share in it. There was, however, something more than a conflict of political views between Carteret and Walpole. Walpole's ambition was to be the constitutional dictator of England. We do not say that this was a mere personal ambition; on the contrary, we believe Walpole acted on the honest conviction that he knew better than any other man how England ought to be governed. He was sure, and reasonably sure, that no other statesman could play the game so well; he therefore claimed the right to play it. Carteret, on the other hand, was far too strong a man to be quietly pushed into the background. He was determined that if he remained in the service of the State he would be a statesman, and not a clerk.

Therefore, while Carteret and Walpole were colleagues, there was always a struggle going on between them, and like all the political struggles of the time, it had a great deal of underhand influence, and the worst kind of petticoat influence, engaged in it. One of the King's mistresses—the most influential of them—gave all her support to Walpole; another royal paramour lent her aid to Carteret's side. Carteret played into the King's hands as regarded the Hanoverian policy, and was for taking strong measures against Russia. Townshend and Walpole would hear of no schemes which threatened to entangle England in war for the sake of Hanoverian interests. George liked Carteret and was captivated by his policy, as well as by his personal qualities, but he could not help seeing that Townshend's advice was the sounder, and that no man could manage the finances like Walpole. George went to Hanover in the summer of 1723, and both the Secretaries of State went with him. This was something unusual, and even unprecedented; but the King would not do without the companionship of Carteret, and knew that he could not do without the advice of Townshend. So both Townshend and Carteret went with his Majesty to Herrenhausen, and Walpole had the whole business of administration in his own hands at home.

A very paltry and pitiful intrigue at length settled the question between Townshend and Carteret. A marriage had been arranged between a niece, or so-called niece, of one of George's mistresses and the son of La Vrillière, the French Secretary of State. Madame La Vrillière insisted, as a condition of the marriage, that her husband should be made a duke, and it was assumed that this could be brought about by the influence of the English Government. King George was anxious that the marriage should take place, and Carteret, of course, was willing to assist him. The English Ambassador at the Court of France was a man named Sir Luke Schaub, by birth a Swiss, who had been Stanhope's secretary, and by Stanhope's influence was pushed up in the diplomatic service. Sir Luke Schaub was in close understanding with Carteret, and was strongly hostile to Townshend and Walpole. Of this fact Townshend was well aware, and he took care that Schaub should be closely watched in Paris. Schaub was instructed by Carteret to do all he could in order to obtain the dukedom for Madame La Vrillière's husband. Cardinal Dubois died, and his place in the councils of the Duke of Orleans was taken by Count Nocé, who was believed to be hostile to England. This fact gave Townshend an excuse for suggesting to the King that some one should be sent to Paris to watch over the action of the French Government and the conduct of the English Ambassador, "in such a manner," so Townshend wrote from Hanover to Walpole, "as may neither hurt Sir Luke Schaub's credit with the Duke of Orleans, nor create a jealousy in Sir Luke of the King's intending to withdraw his confidence from him." This was, of course, exactly what Townshend wanted to do—to induce the King to withdraw his confidence from poor Sir Luke. The King agreed that it was necessary some one "in whose fidelity and dexterity he can depend" should set out from England to Hanover, "and take Paris on his way hither, under pretence of a curiosity to see that place, and without owing to any one living the business he is employed in." The person selected for this somewhat delicate mission was Horace Walpole, Robert Walpole's only surviving brother.

Horace Walpole acquitted himself very cleverly of the

task assigned to him. He was a man of uncouth manners, but of some shrewd ability and of varied experience. He had been a soldier with Stanhope before acting as Under-Secretary of State to Townshend; he had managed to distinguish himself in Parliament and in diplomacy. He soon contrived to obtain the ear of the Duke of Orleans, and he found that Sir Luke Schaub had been deceiving himself and his Sovereign about the prospect of La Vrillière's dukedom. Philip of Orleans told Horace Walpole frankly that there never was the slightest idea of giving such a dukedom, and added that the dignity of France would be compromised if such a concession were made in order to enable the King of England "to marry his bastard daughter"—so the Duke put it—into the French *noblesse*. Sir Luke Schaub's haste and indiscreet zeal had, in fact, brought his Sovereign into discredit, and even compromised the good understanding between England and France.

Philip of Orleans died almost immediately. His death was sudden; but he had long run a course which set all laws of health at defiance. He stuck to his pleasures to the very last—died, one might say, in harness. His successor in the administration of France, under the young King Louis the Fifteenth, who had just been declared of age, was the Duke de Bourbon, Philip's equal perhaps in profligacy, but not by any means his equal in capacity. Horace Walpole won over the new administrator. The Duke de Bourbon told him that Sir Luke Schaub was obnoxious to every one in the French Court, and that he was not fit, by birth, breeding, or capacity, to represent England there.

We need not follow the intrigue through all its turns and twists. Walpole and Townshend succeeded. Schaub was recalled; Horace Walpole was appointed Ambassador in his place. The recall of Schaub involved the fall of Carteret. Carteret, however, was not a man to be rudely thrust out of office, and a soft fall was therefore prepared for him; he was made Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. He knew that he was defeated. Then, as at a later day and at an earlier, the Viceroyalty of Ireland was the gilding which enabled a man to gulp down the bitter pill of political



failure. When Lord John Russell obtained the dismissal of Lord Palmerston from his Cabinet in 1851 he endeavoured, somewhat awkwardly, to soften the blow by offering to his dispossessed rival the position of Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. Lord Palmerston understood the meaning of the offer, and treated it—as was but natural—with open contempt. Carteret acted otherwise. Probably he felt within himself that he was not destined to a great political career. In any case, he accepted the offer with perfect good humour, declaring that, on the whole, he thought he should be much more pleasantly situated as a dictator in Dublin than as the servant of a dictator in London.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE DRAPIER'S LETTERS

LORD CARTERET arrived at the seat of his Viceroyalty in the midst of a political storm which threatened at one time to blow down a good many shaky institutions. He found the whole country, and especially the capital, convulsed by an agitation the like of which was not seen again until the days of Grattan and the Volunteers. The hero of the agitation was Swift; the spell-words which gave it life and direction were found in "The Drapier's Letters."

The copper coinage of Ireland had been for a long time deficient. Employers of labour had in many cases been obliged to pay their workmen in tokens; sometimes even with pieces of card, stamped and signed, and representing each a small amount. During Sunderland's time of power the Government set themselves to work to supply the lack of copper, and invited tenders from the owners of mines for the supply. A Mr. William Wood, a man who owned iron and copper mines, and iron and copper works, sent in a tender which was accepted. A patent was given to Wood permitting him to coin halfpence and farthings to the value of one hundred and eight thousand pounds. Walpole had not approved of the scheme himself, but for various reasons

he did not venture to upset it. He had the patent prepared, and consulted Sir Isaac Newton, then Master of the Mint, with regard to the objects which the Government had in view, and the weight and fineness of the coin which Wood was to supply. The halfpence and farthings were to be a little less in weight than the coin of the same kind current in England. Walpole considered this necessary because of the difference in exchange between the two countries. Sir Isaac Newton was of opinion that the Irish coin exceeded the English in fineness of metal. As to the King's prerogative for granting such patents, Walpole himself explained in a letter to Lord Townshend, then in Hanover with the King, that it was one never disputed and often exercised. The granting of this patent, and the mode of supplying the deficiency in copper coin, might seem little open to objection; but the Irish Privy Council at once declared against the whole transaction. Both Houses of the Irish Parliament passed addresses to the King, declaring that the introduction of Wood's coinage would be injurious to the revenue and positively destructive of trade. The Irish Lord Chancellor set himself sternly against the patent in private, and urged all his friends, comrades, and dependants, to act publicly against it. The addresses from the two Houses of Parliament were sent to Walpole, who transmitted them to Lord Townshend. Walpole accompanied the addresses with an explanation in which he vindicated the policy represented by the granting of the patent, and insisted that no harm whatever could be done to the trade or revenue of Ireland by the introduction of the new copper coinage. Walpole advised that the King should return a soothing and a conciliatory reply to the addresses, and the King acted accordingly. It seemed at one time probable that a satisfactory compromise would be arranged between the Irish Parliament and King George's Ministers. This hope, however, was soon dispelled.

One objection felt by the Irish people in general to the patent and the new coinage was founded on the discovery of the fact that Wood had agreed to pay a large bribe to the Duchess of Kendal for her influence in obtaining the patent for him. The objection of the Irish Executive, and

the Irish Parliament was mainly based on the fact that Dublin had not been consulted in the arrangement of the business. The Ministers in London settled the whole affair, and then simply communicated the nature of the arrangement to Dublin. Wood himself was unpopular, so far as anything could be known of him, in Ireland. He was a stranger to Ireland, and he was represented to be a boastful, arrogant man, who went about saying he could do anything he liked with Walpole, and that he would cram his copper coins down the throats of the Irish people. All these objections might have been got over, but for the sudden appearance of an unexpected and a powerful actor on the scene. One morning appeared in Dublin "A letter to the shop-keepers, tradesmen, farmers, and common people of Ireland, concerning the brass halfpence coined by one William Wood, hardwareman, with a design to have them pass in this kingdom; wherein is shown the power of his patent, the value of his halfpence, and how far every person may be obliged to take the same in payments; and how to behave himself in case such an attempt should be made by Wood or any other person." The letter was signed "M. B., Drapier." This was the first of those famous Drapier's Letters which convulsed Ireland with a passion like that preceding a great popular insurrection. It may be questioned whether the pamphlets of a literary politician ever before or since worked with so powerful an influence on the mind of a nation as these marvellous letters.

The author of "The Drapier's Letters," we need hardly say, was Dean Swift. Swift had for some years withdrawn himself from the political world. He is described by one of his biographers as having "amused himself for three or four years with poetry, conversation, and trifles." Now and then, however, he published some letter which showed his interest in the condition of the people among whom he lived; his proposal, for example, "for the universal use of Irish manufacture in clothes and furniture of houses, &c.," was written in the year 1720. This letter—the printer of which was subjected to a Government prosecution—contains a passage which has been, perhaps, more often and



more persistently misquoted than any other observation of any author we can now remember. It seems to have become an article of faith with many writers and most readers that Swift said, "Burn everything that comes from England, except its coals." Without much hope of correcting that false impression so far as the bulk of the reading and quoting public is concerned, we may observe that Swift never said anything of the kind. This is what he did say: "I heard the late Archbishop of Tuam mention a pleasant observation of somebody's that 'Ireland would never be happy until a law were made for burning everything that came from England except their people and their coals.' I must confess that, as to the former, I should not be sorry if they would stay at home, and, for the latter, I hope in a little time we shall have no occasion for them." Swift was not an Irish patriot; he was not, indeed, an Irishman at all, except by the accident of birth, and now by the accident of residence. He did not love the country; he would not have lived there a week if he could. He had no affection for the people, and, at first, very little sympathy with them. He was always angry if anybody regarded him as an Irishman. His friends were all found amongst what may be described as the English and Protestant colony in Ireland. He felt towards the native Irish—the Irish Catholics—very much as the official of an English Government might feel towards some savage tribe whom he had been sent out to govern. But at the same time it is an entire mistake to represent Swift as insincere in the efforts which he made to ameliorate the condition of the Irish people, and to redress some of the gross wrongs which he saw inflicted on them. The administrator of whom we have already spoken might have gone out to the savage country with nothing but contempt for its wild natives, but if he were at all a humane and a just man, it would be natural for him as time went on to feel keenly if any injustice were inflicted on the poor creatures whom he despised, and at last to stand up with indignation as their defender and their champion. So it was with Swift. Little as he liked the Irish people in the beginning, yet he had a temper and a spirit which made him intolerant of injustice and oppression. That fierce

indignation described by himself, and of which such store was always laid up in his heart, was roused to its highest point of heat by the sight of the miseries of the Irish people and of the frequent acts of neglect and injustice by which their misery was deepened. He felt the most sincere resentment at the arbitrary manner in which the Government in London were dealing with Ireland in the matter of Wood's patent and Wood's copper coin. Swift, of course, knew well by what influence the patent had been obtained, and he knew that when obtained it had been simply thrust upon the Irish authorities, Parliament, and people without any previous sanction or knowledge on their part. Very likely he was also convinced, or had convinced himself, that the patent and the new coin would be injurious to the revenues and the trade of the country. Certainly, if he was not convinced of this, he gave to all his diatribes against Wood, Wood's patent, and Wood's halfpence the tones of profoundest conviction. He assumed the character of a draper for the moment—why he chose to spell draper "drapier" nobody knew—and he certainly succeeded in putting on all the semblance of an honest trader driven to homely and robust indignation by an impudent proposal to injure the business of himself and his neighbours. In England, he says, "the halfpence and farthings pass for very little more than they are worth, and if you should beat them to pieces and sell them to the brazier, you would not lose much above a penny in a shilling." But he goes on to say that Mr. Wood, whom he describes as "a mean, ordinary man, a hardware dealer"—Wood was, as we have already seen, a large owner of iron and copper mines and works, but that was all one to Dean Swift—"made his halfpence of such base metal and so much smaller than the English ones, that the brazier would hardly give you above a penny of good money for a shilling of his; so that this sum of one hundred and eight thousand pounds in good gold and silver may be given for trash that will not be worth above eight or nine thousand pounds real value." Nor is even this the worst, he contends, "for Mr. Wood, when he pleases, may by stealth send over another hundred and eight thousand pounds and buy all our goods for

eleven parts in twelve under the value." "For example," says Swift, "if a hatter sells a dozen of hats for five shillings apiece, which amounts to three pounds, and receives the payment in Wood's coin, he really receives only the value of five shillings." Of course this is the wildest exaggeration—is, in fact, mere extravagance and absurdity, if regarded as a financial proposition. But Swift understood, as hardly any other man understood, the art of employing exaggeration with such an effect as to make it do the business of unquestionable fact. He was able to make his literary coins pass for much more than Wood could do with his halfpence and farthings. The artistic skill which bade the creatures whom Gulliver saw in his travels seem real, life-like, and living made the fantastic extravagance of the "Drapier's Letters" strike home with all the force of truth to the minds of an excited populace.

Many biographers and historians have expressed a blank and utter amazement at the effect which Swift's letters produced. They have chosen to regard it as a mere historical curiosity, a sort of political paradox and puzzle. They have described the Irish people at the time as under the spell of something like sorcery. Even in our own days, Mr. Gladstone, in a speech delivered to the House of Commons, treated the convulsion caused by Swift's letters and Wood's halfpence as an outbreak of national frenzy, called up by the witchery of style displayed in the "Drapier's Letters." To some of us it is, on the other hand, a matter of surprise to see how capable writers, and especially how a man of Mr. Gladstone's genius and political knowledge, could for a moment be thus deceived. One is almost inclined to think that Mr. Gladstone could not have been reading the "Drapier's Letters" recently, when he thus spoke of the effect which they produced, and thus was willing to explain it. Any one who reads the letters with impartial attention will see that from first to last the anger that burns in them, the sarcasm that withers and scorches, the passionate eloquence that glows in even their most carefully measured sentences, are directed against Wood and his halfpence only because the patent, the bribe by which it was purchased, and the manner in which it was forced on



Ireland, represented the injustice of the whole system of Irish administration, and the wrongs of many generations. "It would be very hard if all Ireland," Swift declares with indignation, "should be put into one scale, and this sorry fellow Wood into the other." "I have a pretty good shop of Irish stuffs and silks," the Drapier declares, "and instead of taking Mr. Wood's bad copper, I intend to truck with my neighbours, the butchers, and bakers, and brewers, and the rest, goods for goods; and the little gold and silver I have, I will keep by me like my heart's blood till better times, or until I am just ready to starve." "Wood's contract?" he asks. "His contract with whom? Was it with the Parliament or people of Ireland?" The reader who believes that such a passage as that, and scores of similar passages, were inspired merely by disapproval of the introduction of one hundred and eight thousand pounds in copper coin, must have very little understanding of Swift's temper or Swift's purpose, or the condition of the times in which Swift lived. "I will shoot Mr. Wood and his deputies through the head, like highway-men or house-breakers, if they dare to force one farthing of their coin on me in the payment of an hundred pounds. It is no loss of honour to submit to the lion, but who in the figure of a man can think with patience of being devoured alive by a rat?" . . . "If the famous Mr. Hampden rather chose to go to prison than pay a few shillings to King Charles I. without authority of Parliament, I will rather choose to be hanged than have all my substance taxed at seventeen shillings in the pound, at the arbitrary will and pleasure of the venerable Mr. Wood." Mr. Gladstone, perhaps, did not observe this allusion to "the famous Mr. Hampden." If he had done so, he would have better understood the inspiration of the "Drapier's Letters." Mr. Hampden was not so ignorant a man as to believe that the mere collection of the ship-money—the mere withdrawal of so much money from the pockets of certain taxpayers—would really ruin the trade and imperil the national existence of England. What Mr. Hampden objected to, and would have resisted to the death, was the unconstitutional and despotic system which the levy of the ship-money represented. The

American colonists did not rise in rebellion against the Government of George III. merely because they had eaten of the insane root, and fancied that a trifling tax upon tea would destroy the trade of Boston and New York. They rose in arms against the principle represented by the imposition of the tax. We can all understand why there should have been a national rebellion against ship-money, and a national rebellion against a trumpety duty on tea ; but English writers, and English public men, seem quite unable to explain the national outcry against Wood's patent, except on the theory that a clever writer, pouring forth captivating nonsense, bewitched the Irish Parliament and the Irish people, and sent them out of their senses for a season.

Swift followed up his first letter by others in rapid succession. Lord Carteret arrived in Ireland when the agitation was at its height. He issued a proclamation against the "Drapier's Letters," offered a reward of three hundred pounds for the discovery of the author, and had the printer arrested. The Grand Jury, however, unanimously threw out the bill sent up against Harding, the printer. Another Grand Jury passed a presentment against all persons who should by fraud or otherwise impose Wood's copper coins upon the public. This presentment is said to have been drawn up by Swift's own hand. Lord Carteret at last had the good sense to perceive, and the spirit to acknowledge, that there was no alternative between concession and rebellion. He strongly urged his convictions on the Government, and the Government had the wisdom to yield. The patent was withdrawn, a pension was given to Wood in consideration of the loss he had sustained, and Swift was the object of universal gratitude, enthusiasm, love, and devotion, on the part of the Irish nation. Many a patriotic Irishman would fain believe to this very day that Swift, too, was Irish, and an Irish patriot. Ireland certainly has not yet forgotten, probably never will forget, the successful stand made by Swift against what he believed to be an insult to the Irish nation, when he took up his pen to write the first of the Drapier's immortal Letters.

## CHAPTER XVI

## THE OPPOSITION

THE trouble had hardly been got rid of in Ireland by Carteret's judicious advice and the withdrawal of Wood's patent when a commotion that at one time threatened to be equally serious broke out in Scotland. English members of Parliament had been for many years complaining that Scotland was exempt from any taxation on malt. Up to that time no Government had attempted to take any steps towards establishing equality in this respect between the two countries. Walpole now strove to deal with the question. It was proposed in the House of Commons that instead of a malt duty in Scotland a duty of sixpence should be levied on every barrel of ale. Walpole at first was not inclined to deal with the difficulty in this way, but as the feeling of the House was very strongly in favour of making some attempt, he consented to adopt the principle suggested, but required that the duty should be threepence instead of sixpence. The moment it became known in Scotland that any tax on malt or ale was to be imposed, rioting began in the principal cities; the spirit of the national motto asserted itself—"nemo me impune lacessit." The ringleaders of various mobs were arrested and sent for trial, but the Scotch juries, following the recent example of the Irish, refused to convict. Brewers all over Scotland entered into a sort of league by virtue of which they pledged themselves not to give any securities for the new duty and to cease brewing if the Government exacted it. Unluckily for Walpole, the Secretary of State for Scotland, the Duke of Roxburgh, was a great friend of Carteret's, and had joined with Carteret in endeavouring to thwart Walpole in all his undertakings. The success of Walpole's policy in any instance was understood by Carteret and by Roxburgh to mean Walpole's supremacy over all other Ministers. The Duke of Roxburgh therefore took advantage of the crisis in Scotland to injure the Administration,



and especially to injure Walpole. In a subtle and underhand way he contrived to favour and foment the disturbance. He took care that the orders of the Government should not be too quickly carried out, and he gave more than a tacit encouragement to the common rumour that the King in his heart was hostile to the new tax, that the tax was wholly an invention of Walpole's, and that resistance to such a measure would not be unwelcome to the Sovereign, and would lead to the dismissal of the Minister. Walpole was not long in finding out the treachery of the Duke of Roxburgh. To adopt a homely phrase, he "took the bull by the horns" at once. Lord Townshend was in Hanover with the King, and Walpole wrote to Lord Townshend, giving him a full account of all that was going on in Scotland, and laying the chief blame for the continuance of the disturbance on the Duke of Roxburgh. "I beg leave to observe," wrote Walpole, "that the present Administration is the first that was ever yet known to be answerable for the whole Government with a Secretary of State for one part of the kingdom who, they are assured, acts counter to all their measures, or at least whom they cannot confide in." His remonstrance had to be pressed again and again upon Townshend before anything was done to satisfy him. Walpole, however, was a man to press where he thought the occasion demanded it, and he was successful in the end. The Duke of Roxburgh had to resign, and Walpole added to his own duties those of the Secretary of State for Scotland. He appointed as his agent or deputy in the administration of Scotland the Earl of Isla, Lord-Keeper of the Privy Seal in that country, and a man on whose allegiance he could entirely rely. Having thus secured a full power to act, Walpole was not long in bringing the disturbances to an end. He displayed both discretion and resolve. He was able to satisfy the most reasonable among the brewers and maltsters that their interests would not really suffer by the proposed resolutions. The natural result was that the combination of brewers began to melt away. The brewers held a meeting, and it was soon found that it would not be possible to secure a general resolution to meet the legislation of the

Government by passive resistance and by ceasing to brew. As all would not stand together, every man was left to take his own course, and the result was that what we should now call a strike came quietly to an end.

A modern reader is naturally shocked and surprised at the manner in which members of the same Government in Walpole's day intrigued against one another, and strove to thwart each other's policy. No actual defence is to be made for such a practice; but it is only fair to observe that up to Walpole's own entrance into office, and after it, the habit of English Sovereigns had been to make up an Administration by taking members of different and even of opposing parties and bringing them together, in the hope of securing thereby the co-operation of all parties. Under these circumstances it was natural, it was only to be expected, that the Minister who was pledged to one policy would endeavour by all means in his power to counteract the designs of the Minister whom he knew to be pledged to a very different kind of policy. Nor, indeed, is the practice of intrigue and counter-intrigue among members of the same Cabinet actually unknown in our own days, when there is not the same excuse to be pleaded for it that might have been urged in the time of Walpole. In the case of the Duke of Roxburgh, however, the attempt to counteract the policy of Walpole was made in somewhat bolder and less subtle fashion than was common even in those days, and Walpole was well justified in the course he took. For once his high-handed way of dealing with men was vindicated by its principle and by the unqualified advantage it brought to the interests of the State and to those of the Minister as well.

The student of history derives one satisfaction from the frequent visits of King George to Hanover. The correspondence between Walpole and Townshend which was made necessary by those visits gives us many an interesting glimpse into political affairs in their reality, in their undress, in their secret movement, which no ordinary State papers or diplomatic despatches could be trusted to give. The Secretary of State often communicates to the representative

of his country at some foreign court only just that view of a political situation which he wishes to put under the eyes of the foreign Sovereign and foreign statesmen. But Walpole writes to Townshend exactly what he himself believes, and what it is important both to Townshend and to him that Townshend shall fully know. "I think," Walpole says to Townshend in one of his letters, "we have once more got Ireland and Scotland quiet, if we take care to keep them so." Exactly; if only care be taken to keep them so. The same chance had often been given to English statesmen before; Ireland and Scotland quiet, and might have continued in quietness if care had only been taken to keep them so.

The King was much pleased with Walpole's success. He made him one of the thirty-eight Knights of the Bath. The Order of the Bath had gone out of use, out of existence in fact, since the coronation of Charles the Second; George the First revived it in 1725, and bestowed its honours on Walpole. It seems an odd sort of reward for the shrewd, practical, and somewhat coarse-fibred squire-statesman. The close connection between man and the child, civilised man and the savage, is never more clearly illustrated than in the joy and pride which the wisest statesman feels in the wearing of a ribbon or a star. In the next year the King made Walpole a Knight of the Garter; after this honour all other mark of dignity would be but an anti-climax. From the time of his introduction to the Order of the Bath, the great Minister ceased to be plain Mr. Walpole, and became Sir Robert Walpole.

Meanwhile, under Walpole's Order of the Bath many a throb of pain must have made itself felt. The Minister began to find himself harassed by the most formidable opposition that had ever set itself against him. Lord Carteret was out of the way for the moment—and only for the moment; but Pulteney proved a much more pertinacious, ingenious, and dangerous enemy than Carteret had hitherto been. Pulteney was at one time the faithful follower, the enthusiastic admirer, almost the devotee, of Walpole. The one great political defect of Walpole filled him with faults. He could not bear the idea of a divided



rule ; he would be all or nothing ; he would have clerks and servants for his colleagues in office ; not real ministers, actual statesmen. He was under the mistaken impression that a man of genius is to be reduced to tame insignificance by merely keeping him out of important office. He had made this mistake with regard to Carteret ; he made it now with regard to Pulteney. The consequences were far more serious ; for Pulteney was neither so good-humoured nor so indolent as Carteret, and he could not be put aside.

Pulteney was a man of singular eloquence, and of eloquence peculiarly adapted to the House of Commons. His style was brilliant, incisive, and penetrating. He could speak on any subject on the spur of the moment. He never delivered a set speech. He was a born parliamentary debater. All his resources seemed to be at instant command, according as he had need of them. His reading was wide, deep, and varied ; he was a most accomplished classical scholar, and had a marvellous readiness and aptitude for classical allusion. He was a wit and a humorist ; he could brighten the dullest topics and make them sparkle by odd and droll illustrations, as well as by picturesque allusions and eloquent phrases. He could, when the subject called for it, break suddenly into thrilling invective. But he had some of the defects of the extemporaneous orator. His eloquence, his wit, his epigrams often carried him away from his better judgment. He frequently committed himself to some opinion which was not really his, and was led far from his proper position in the pursuit of some paradox, or by the charm of some fantastic idea. He was a brilliant writer as well as a brilliant speaker. His private character would have little blame if it were not that a fondness for money kept growing with his growing years. "For a good old-gentlemanly vice," says Byron, "I think I must take up with avarice." Pulteney did not even wait to be an old gentleman to take up with "the good old-gentlemanly vice." We have in some measure now to take his talents on trust, as we have those of Carteret. He proved to be little more than the comet of a season ; when he had gone, he left no line of light behind him. But it is certain that in the estimation

of his contemporaries he was one of the most gifted men of his time; and for a while he was the most popular man in England—the darling and the hero of the multitude. When Walpole was sent to the Tower in Queen Anne's reign, Pulteney had spoken up manfully for his friend. When Townshend and Walpole resigned office in 1717, Pulteney went resolutely with them and resigned office also. The time came when Walpole found himself triumphant over all his enemies, and came back not merely to office, but likewise to power. Naturally, Pulteney expected that Walpole would invite him to fill some place of importance in the new Administration. Walpole did nothing of the kind. He had seen ample evidence of Pulteney's great parliamentary talents in the meantime, and he feared that with Pulteney for an official colleague he could never be a dictator. He was anxious, however, not to offend Pulteney; and he had the curious weakness to imagine that he could conciliate Pulteney by offering him a peerage. Even at that time, when the sceptre of popular power had not yet passed altogether into the hands of the representative chamber, it was absurd to suppose that Pulteney would consent to be withdrawn from the House in which he had made his fame, which was his natural and fitting place, and which already was seen by every man of sense to be the central force of England's political life. Pulteney contemptuously refused the peerage. From that hour his old love for Walpole seems to have turned into hate.

The explosion did not come at once. Pulteney continued to be on seemingly good terms with Walpole, and shortly afterwards the comparatively humble post of Cofferer to the Household was offered to him—some say was asked for by him. It does not seem likely that even then he had any intention of a serious reconciliation with Walpole. Perhaps he accepted this post in the expectation that he would shortly be raised to a much higher position in the State. But Walpole, although willing enough to give him any mark or place of honour on condition that he withdrew to the House of Lords, was afraid to allow him any office of influence while he remained in the Commons. However this may be, Pulteney's ambition

was not satisfied, and he very soon broke publicly away from Walpole altogether. When a motion was brought on in April 1725 for discharging the debts of the Civil List, in reply to a message from the King himself, Pulteney demanded an enquiry into the manner in which the money had been spent, and even made a fierce attack on the whole Administration, and accused it of something very like downright corruption. He was dismissed from his office as Cofferer, and, even making allowance for his love of money, the wonder is that he should have held it long enough to be dismissed from it. He then went avowedly over into the ranks of the enemies of Walpole inside and outside the House of Commons.

The position taken by Pulteney is chiefly interesting to us now in the fact that it opened a distinctly new chapter in English politics. Pulteney created the part of what has ever since been called the Leader of Opposition. With him begins the time when the real Leader of Opposition must have a place in the House of Commons; with him, too, begins the time when the Opposition has for its recognised duty not merely to watch with jealous care all the acts of the Ministers in order to prevent them from doing anything wrong, but also to watch for every opportunity of turning them out of office. With Pulteney and his tactics began the party organisation which inside the House of Commons and outside works unceasingly with tongue and pen, with open antagonism and underhand intrigue, with all the various social as well as political influences—the pamphlet, the press, the petticoat, and even the pulpit—to discredit everything done by the men in office, to turn public opinion against them, and if possible to overthrow them. Pulteney and his supporters were now and then somewhat more unscrupulous in their measures than an English Opposition would be in our time, but theirs was unquestionably the policy of all our more modern English parties. From this time forth almost to the close of his active career as a politician Pulteney performed the part of Leader of Opposition in the strictly modern sense. His position in history seems to us to be distinctly marked as that of the first Leader of Opposition; whether history shows reason to



thank him for creating such a part is another and a different question.

Pulteney had some powerful allies. The King, as we know, hated his son the Prince of Wales; the Prince of Wales hated his father. No reconciliation got up between them could be lasting or real. The father and son hardly ever met except on the occasion of some great public ceremonial. The standing quarrel between the Sovereign and his heir had the effect of creating two parties in political life, one of which supported the King and the King's advisers, while the other found its centre in the house of the Heir to the Throne. We shall see this condition of things reappearing in all the subsequent reigns of the Georges. The Ministry and their friends were detested and denounced by those who surrounded the Prince of Wales; the adherents of the Prince of Wales were virtually proscribed by the King. Then, as at a later date in the history of the Georges, those who favoured and were favoured by the Prince were looking out with anxious hope for the King's death. When "the old King is dead as nail in door," then indeed each leading supporter of the new King believed he could say with Falstaff, "The laws of England are at my commandment; happy are they which have been my friends." Pulteney and his supporters were among the friends and favourites of the Prince of Wales; they constituted the Prince's party. The Prince's party was composed mainly of the men who were Tories but were not Jacobites, and of the Whigs who disliked Walpole or had been overlooked or offended by him, or who in sober honesty were opposed to his policy. In all these, and in a daily growing number of the people out of doors, Pulteney had his friends and Walpole his enemies.

But a more formidable rival than even Pulteney was now again to the front and active in hostility to Walpole. This was the man whom the official records of the time described as "the late Viscount Bolingbroke." The late Viscount Bolingbroke, it need hardly be said, means that Henry St. John whose title of Viscount had been forfeited when he fled to France and joined the Pretender. Bolingbroke had lately received the pardon of King George. He had

secured the pardon chiefly by means of an influence then familiar and recognised in politics—that of one of the King's mistresses. Bolingbroke had got money with his second wife, and through her he conveyed to the Duchess of Kendal a large sum—about ten thousand pounds—with the intimation that more would be forthcoming from the same place, if necessary, to obtain his object. The Duchess of Kendal was easily prevailed upon, under these circumstances, to recognise the justice of Bolingbroke's claim and the sincerity of his repentance. Moreover, there was about the same time that political intrigue, or rather rivalry of intrigues, going on between Walpole and Carteret, between England and France, in which it was thought the influence of Bolingbroke might be used with advantage—as it was, in fact, used—to Walpole's ends. For all these reasons the pardon was obtained, and Bolingbroke was allowed to return to England. Nor was he long put off with a mere forgiveness which kept from him his forfeited estates and his right to the family inheritance. “Here I am,” he wrote to Swift soon after, “two-thirds restored, my person safe (unless I meet hereafter with harder treatment than even that of Sir Walter Raleigh), and my estate, with all the other property I have acquired, or may acquire, secured to me. But the attainder is kept prudently in force, lest so corrupt a member should come again into the House of Lords and his bad leaven should sour that sweet, untainted mass.” Walpole was quite willing that the forfeiture of Lord Bolingbroke's estates and the interruption of the inheritance should be recalled. It was necessary for this purpose to pass an Act of Parliament. On April 20, 1725, Lord Finch presented to the House of Lords the petition “of Henry St. John, late Viscount Bolingbroke.” The petition set forth that the petitioner was “truly concerned for his offence in not having surrendered himself, pursuant to the directions of an Act of the first year of his Majesty's reign”; that he had lately, “in most humble and dutiful manner,” made his submission to the King, and given his Majesty “the strongest assurances of his inviolable fidelity, and of his zeal for his Majesty's service and for the support of the present happy establishment, which

his Majesty hath been most graciously pleased to accept." The petition then prayed that leave might be given to bring in a Bill to enable the petitioner, and his heirs male, to take and enjoy in person the estates of which he was then or afterwards should be possessed. Walpole, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, informed the House that he had received his Majesty's command to say that George was satisfied with Bolingbroke's penitence, was convinced that Lord Bolingbroke was a proper object of mercy, and consented that the petition should be presented to the House.

Lord Finch then moved that a Bill be brought in to carry out the prayer of the petition. The Chancellor of the Exchequer seconded and strongly advocated the motion. It was opposed with great vigour by Mr. Methuen, the Controller of the Household, and formerly British Minister in Portugal. Methuen denounced Bolingbroke's "scandalous and villainous conduct," during his administration of affairs in Queen Anne's reign; his clandestine negotiation for peace; his insolent behaviour towards the allies of England; his sacrificing the interests of the whole Confederacy, and the honour of his country—more especially in the abandonment of the Catalans; "and, to sum up all his crimes in one, his traitorous design of defeating the Protestant succession, and of advancing a Popish pretender to the throne." This speech, we read, "made a great impression on the Assembly," and several distinguished members, Arthur Onslow among the rest, spoke strongly on the same side. The motion was carried by 231 votes against 113. The Bill was prepared, and went up to the House of Lords on May 5, was carried there by a large majority, was sent back to the House of Commons with some slight amendments, was accepted there, and received the royal assent. Some of the peers put on record a strong and earnest protest against the passing of such a measure. The protest recited all the charges against Bolingbroke; declared that those who signed it knew of no particular public services which Bolingbroke had lately rendered, and which would entitle him to a generous treatment; and further added that "no assurances which this person hath given" could be a sufficient security against his



future insincerity; "he having already so often violated the most solemn assurances and obligations, and in defiance of them having openly attempted the dethroning his Majesty, and the destruction of the liberties of his country."

Bolingbroke, however, wanted something more than restoration to his title and to his forfeited right of inheritance. His active and untamed spirit was eager for political strife again; and his heart burned with a longing to take his old place in the debates of the House of Lords. Against this Walpole had made a firm resolve; on this point he would not yield. He would not allow his eloquent and daring rival to have a voice in Parliament any more. In this, as it seems to us, Walpole acted neither wisely nor magnanimously. Bolingbroke's safest place, so far as the interests of the public, and even the political interests of his rivals, were concerned, would have been in the House of Lords. He would have delivered brilliant speeches there, and would have worked off his energies in that harmless fashion. In Walpole's time the idea had not yet arisen that an enemy to the settled order of things is least dangerous where he is most free to speak. Bolingbroke, who had always hated Walpole, even lately when he was professing regard and gratitude, hated him now more than ever, and set to work by all the means in his power to injure Walpole in the estimation of the country, and, if possible, to undermine his whole political position.

Bolingbroke and Pulteney soon came into political companionship. There was a certain affinity between the intellectual nature of the two men; and they had now a common object. Both were literary men as well as politicians, and they naturally put their literary gifts to the fullest account in the campaign they had undertaken. In our days two such men combining for such a purpose would contrive to get incessant leading articles into some daily paper; perhaps would start a weekly or even a daily evening paper of their own. Bolingbroke and Pulteney were men in advance of their age; in some respects at least. They did between them start a paper. They established the famous "Craftsman." "The Craftsman" was

started in 1726. It was first issued daily in single leaves or sheets after the fashion of "The Spectator." It was soon, however, changed into a weekly newspaper bearing the title of "The Craftsman" or "Country Journal." Its editor, Nicholas Amhurst, took the feigned name of Caleb d'Anvers, and the paper itself was commonly called "Caleb" accordingly. "The Craftsman" was brilliantly written, and was inspired by the most unscrupulous passion of partisan hate. Walpole was held up in prose and verse, in bold invective and droll lampoon, as a traitor to the country; as a man stuffed and gorged with public plunder, audacious in his profligate disregard of political principle and common honesty, a danger to the State and a disgrace to Parliamentary life. The circulation of "The Craftsman" at one time surpassed that of "The Spectator," at the height of "The Spectator's" popularity. Not always are more flies caught by honey than by vinegar.

## CHAPTER XVII

### "OSNABRUCK ! OSNABRUCK !"

THE impeachment of Lord Macclesfield was ascribed, rightly or wrongly, to the influence of the Prince of Wales; the comparative leniency of Lord Macclesfield's punishment to the favour and protection of the King. Macclesfield was a justly distinguished judge. He had had the highest standing at the bar; had risen, step by step, until from plain Thomas Parker, the son of an attorney, he became Chief Justice of the Court of King's Bench, then one of the Lords Justices of the kingdom in the interval between Anne's death and the arrival of George the First, and finally Lord Chancellor. George made him Baron, and subsequently Earl, of Macclesfield. He had always borne a high reputation for probity, as well as for generosity, until the charge was made against him on which he was impeached. He was accused of having, while Lord Chancellor, sold the offices of Masters in Chancery to in-

competent persons and men of straw, unfit to be entrusted with the money of suitors, but whom he had publicly represented to be "persons of great fortunes, and in every respect qualified for that trust"; with having extorted money from several of the Masters, and with having embezzled the estates of widows and orphans. On May 6, 1725, the managers of the House of Commons appeared at the bar of the House of Lords, and presented their articles of impeachment against Macclesfield. The trial took place at the bar of the House, and not in Westminster Hall, where impeachments were usually carried on, and it lasted until May 26. There was nothing that could be called a defence to some of the charges, and as to others Lord Macclesfield simply insisted that he had followed the example of some of his most illustrious predecessors, and that the moneys he received as presents were reckoned among the known perquisites of the Great Seal, and were not declared unlawful by any Act of Parliament. The Lords were unanimous in finding Macclesfield guilty, and condemned him to be fined thirty thousand pounds, and to be imprisoned in the Tower until the fine had been paid. The motion that he be declared for ever incapable of any office, place, or employment in the State was, however, rejected; as was also a motion to prohibit him from ever sitting in Parliament, or coming within the verge of the court. It would certainly seem as if these motions ought to have been the natural and necessary consequence of the impeachment and the conviction. If the conviction were just—and it was obviously just—then Lord Macclesfield had disgraced the highest bench of justice, and merely to condemn him to disgorge a part of his plunder was a singularly inadequate sort of punishment. George the First, however, chose to ascribe the impeachment to the malice and the influence of the Prince of Wales, and when Macclesfield had paid the fine by the mortgage of an estate, the King undertook to repay the money to him. George actually did pay to Macclesfield one instalment of a thousand pounds; but fate interposed and prevented any further payment. Macclesfield retired from the world, and spent his remaining years in the study of science, and in religious medita-



tion. He died in 1732. His was a strange story. He had many of the noblest qualities; he had had, on the whole, a great career. It is not easy, if we may borrow the words which Burke applied to a more picturesque and interesting sufferer, "to contemplate without emotion that elevation and that fall."

During all this time of comparative quietude we are not to suppose that there were no threatenings of foreign disturbance. The adherents of the Stuarts were never at rest; the controversies which grew out of the Treaty of Utrecht were always sputtering and menacing. Cardinal Fleury, a statesman devoted to peace and economy, had become Prime Minister of France. Other new figures were arising on the field of Continental politics. Alberoni, in exile and disgrace, had been succeeded by a burlesque imitation of him, the Duke of Ripperda, a Dutch adventurer who turned diplomatist, and had risen into influence through Alberoni's favour. In 1725 Ripperda negotiated a secret treaty between the Emperor, Charles the Sixth, and the King of Spain, and was rewarded with the title of duke. He became Prime Minister of Spain for a short time, to be presently disgraced and thrown into prison, quite after the fashion of a royal favourite in the pages of "Gil Blas." He was a fantastic, arrogant, feather-headed creature, an Alberoni of the opera bouffe. He betook himself at last to the service of the Sovereign of Morocco. England had a sort of Ripperda of her own in the person of the wild Duke of Wharton, the man whose eloquent and ferocious invective had contributed to the sudden death of Lord Stanhope, and who had since that time devoted himself to the service of James Stuart on the Continent, and actually fought as a volunteer in the ranks of the Spanish army at the abortive siege of Gibraltar. It is to the credit of the sincerer and better supporters of the Stuart cause, that they would not even still consent to regard it as wholly lost. They kept their eyes fixed on England, and every murmur of national discontent or disturbance became to them a new encouragement, a fresh signal of hope, a reviving incitement to energy. In England men were constantly hearing rumours about the dissolute life of the Chevalier, and his quarrels

with his wife Clementina Maria, a granddaughter of one of the Kings of Poland. The loyalists here at home were ready to believe anything that could be said by anybody to the discredit of James and his adherents; James and his adherents were willing to be fed on any tales about the unpopularity of George the First, and the tottering condition of his throne. Nor could it be said that George was popular with any class of persons in England. If the reign of the Brunswicks depended upon personal popularity it would not have endured for many years. But the people of England were able to see clearly enough that George allowed his great Minister to rule for him, and that Walpole's policy meant prosperity and peace. They did not admire George's mistresses any more now than they had done when first these ladies set their large feet on English soil; but even some of the most devoted followers of the Stuart cause shook their heads sadly over the doings of James in Italy, and could not pretend to say that the cause of morality would gain much by a change from Brunswick to Stuart.

The end was very near for George. He was now an old man, in his sixty-eighth year, and he had not led a life to secure a long lease of health. His excesses in eating and drinking, his hot punch, and his many mistresses, had proved too much even for his originally robust constitution. Of late he had become a mere wreck. He was eager to pay one other visit to Hanover, and he embarked at Greenwich on June 3, 1727, landing in Holland on the 7th of the month. He made for his capital as quickly as he could, but in the course of the journey he was attacked by a sort of lethargic paralysis. Early on June 10 he was seized with an apoplectic fit; his hands hung motionless by his sides, his eyes were fixed, glassy, and staring, and his tongue protruded from his mouth. The sight of him horrified his attendants; they wished to stop at once and secure some assistance for the poor old dying King. George, however, recovered consciousness so far as to be able to insist on pursuing his journey, crying out, with spasmodic efforts at command, the words "Osnabruck! Osnabruck!" At Osnabruck lived his brother the Prince-Bishop. The

attendants dared not disobey George, even at that moment. and the carriage drove at its fullest speed on towards Osnabruck. No swiftness of wheels, however, no flying chariot, could have reached the house of the Prince-Bishop in time for the King. When the royal carriages clattered into the courtyard of the Prince-Bishop's palace the reign of the first George was over—the old King lay dead in his seat. Lord Townshend and the Duchess of Kendal were following in different carriages on the road ; an express was sent back to tell them the grim news. Lord Townshend came on to Osnabruck, and, finding that the King was dead, had nothing to do but to return home at once. The Duchess of Kendal is stated to have shown all the signs of grief proper to be expected from a favourite. She tore her hair—at least she pulled and clutched at it—and she beat her ample bosom, and professed the uttermost horror at the thought of having to endure life without the companionship of her lord and master. It is satisfactory to know that she did not die of grief. She lived for some sixteen years, and made her home for the most part at Kendal House, near Twickenham.

Even such a man as George the First may become invested by death with a certain dignity and something of a romantic interest. Legends are afloat concerning the King's later days which would not be altogether unworthy the closing hours of a great Roman emperor. George had his melting moments, it would seem, and not long before his death, being in a pathetic mood, he gave the Duchess of Kendal a pledge that if he should die before her and it were possible for departed souls to return to earth and impress the living with a knowledge of their presence, he, the faithful and aged lover, would come back from the grave to his mistress. When the Duchess of Kendal returned to her home near Twickenham she was in constant expectation of a visit in some form from her lost adorer. One day while the windows of her house were open, a large black raven, or bird of some kind—raven would seem to be the more becoming and appropriate form for such a visitor—flew into her presence from the outer air. The lamenting lady assumed at once that in this shape the soul



of King George had come back to earth. She cherished and petted the bird, it is said, and lavished all fondness and tenderness upon it. What became of it in the end history does not allow us to know. Whether it still is sitting, like the more famous raven of poetry, it is not for us to guess. Probably when the Duchess herself expired in 1743 the ghastly, grim, and ancient raven disappeared with her. Why George the First, if he had the power of returning in any shape to see his mistress, did not come in his own proper form, it is not for us to explain. One might be disposed to imagine that in such a case it would be the first step which would involve the cost, and that there would be no greater difficulty for the departed soul to come back in the likeness of its old vestment of clay than to put on the unfamiliar and somewhat inconvenient form of a fowl. Perhaps the story is not true. Possibly there was no raven or other bird in the case at all. It may be that, if a black raven did fly in at the Duchess of Kendal's window, the bird was not the embodied spirit of King George. For ourselves, we should be sorry to lose the story. Neither the King nor the mistress could afford to part with any slight element of romance wherewithal even legend has chosen to invest them. Another story, which probably has more truth in it, adds a new ghastliness to the circumstances of George's death. On November 13, 1726, some seven months before that event, there died in a German castle a woman whom the gazette of the capital described as the Electress Dowager of Hanover. This was the unfortunate Princess Sophia, the wife of George. Thirty-two years of melancholy captivity she had endured, while George was drinking and hoarding money and amusing himself with his seraglio of ugly women. She died protesting her innocence to the last. In the closing days of her illness, so runs the story, she gave into the hands of some one whom she could trust a letter addressed to her husband, and obtained a promise that the letter should, somehow or other, be delivered to George himself. This letter contained a final declaration that she was absolutely guiltless of the offence alleged against her, a bitter reproach to George for his ruthless conduct, and a solemn summons

to him to stand by her side before the judgment-seat of Heaven within a year, and there make answer in her presence for the wrongs he had done her, for her blighted life and her miserable death. There was no way of getting this letter into George's hands while the King was in England; but an arrangement was made by means of which it was put into his coach when he crossed the frontier of Germany on his way towards his capital. George, it is said, opened the letter at once, and was so surprised and horror-stricken by its stern summons that he fell that moment into the apoplectic fit from which he never recovered. Sophia, therefore, had herself accomplished her own revenge; her reproach had killed the King; her summons brought him at once within the ban of that judgment to which she had called him. It would be well if one could believe the story; there would seem a dramatic justice—a tragic retribution—about it. Its very terror would dignify the story of a life that, on the whole, was commonplace and vulgar. But, for ourselves, we confess that we cannot believe in the mysterious letter, the fatal summons, the sudden fulfilment. There are too many stories of the kind floating about history to allow us to attach any special significance to this particular tale. We doubt even whether, if the letter had been written, it would have greatly impressed the mind of George. Remorse for the treatment of his wife he could not have felt—he was incapable of any such emotion; and we question whether any appeal to the sentiment of the supernatural, any summons to another and an impalpable world, would have made much impression on that stolid, prosaic intelligence and that heart of lead. Besides, according to some versions of the tale, it was not, after all, a letter from his wife which impressed him, but only the warning of a fortune-teller—a woman who admonished the King to be careful of the life of his imprisoned consort, because it was fated for him that he should not survive her a year. This story, too, is told of many kings and other persons less illustrious.

Much more probable is the rumour that Sophia made a will bequeathing all her personal property to her son, that

the will was given to George the First in England, and that he composedly destroyed it. If George committed this act, he seems to have been repaid in kind. His own will left large legacies to the Duchess of Kendal, and to other ladies. The Archbishop of Canterbury gave the will to the new King, who read it, put it in his pocket, walked away with it, and never produced it again. Both these stories are doubted by some of the contemporaries of George the Second, but they were firmly believed in and strongly asserted by others, who seem to have had authority for their belief. At all events, they fit in better with the character and surroundings of both princes than the tragic story of the letter and its fearful summons, the warning of the fortune-teller, or the soul of the dead King revisiting the earth in the funereal form of a raven.

There is not much that is good to be said of George the First. He had a certain prosaic honesty, and was frugal amid all his vulgar voluptuousness. He managed the expenses of his court with creditable economy and regularity. The officers in his army, and his civil servants, received their pay at the properly appointed time. It would be hardly worth while recording these particulars to the King's credit, but that it was somewhat of a novelty in the arrangements of a modern court for men to receive the reward of their services at regular intervals, and in the proper amount. George occasionally did a liberal thing, and he more than once professed a strong interest in the improvement of university education. He is said to have declared to a German nobleman, who was complimenting him on the possession of two such kingdoms as England and Hanover, that a king ought to be congratulated rather on having two such subjects as Newton in the one country and Leibnitz in the other. We fear, however, that this story must go with the fortune-teller and the raven; one cannot think of dull prosaic George uttering such a monumental sort of sentiment. He cared nothing for literature, or science, or art. He seems to have had no genuine friendships. He hated his son, and he used to speak of his daughter-in-law, Caroline, as "that she-devil the



Princess." Whatever was respectable in his character came out best at times of trial. He was not a man whom danger could make afraid. At the most critical moments—as, for instance, at the outbreak of the rebellion in 1715—he never lost his head. If he was not capable of seeing far, he saw clearly, and he could look coming events steadily in the face. On one or two occasions, when an important choice had to be made between this political course and that, he chose quickly and well. The fact that he thoroughly appreciated the wisdom and the political integrity of Walpole speaks, perhaps, his highest praise. His reign, on the whole, was one of prosperity for England. He did not love England—never, up to the very end, cared for the country over which destiny had appointed him to rule. His soul to the last was faithful to Hanover. England was to him as the State wife whom for political reasons he was compelled to marry; Hanover, as the sweetheart and mistress of his youth, to whom his affections, such as they were, always clung, and whom he stole out to see at every possible chance. George behaved much better to his political consort, England, than to the veritable wife of his bosom. He managed England's affairs for her like an honest, straightforward, narrow-minded steward. We shall see hereafter that England came to be governed much worse by men not nearly so bad as George the First. To do him justice, he knew when he ought to leave the business of the State in the hands of those who understood it better than he; this one merit redeemed many of his faults, and, perhaps, may be regarded as having secured his dynasty. Frederick the Great described George as a Prince who governed England by respecting liberty, even while he made use of the subsidies granted by Parliament to corrupt the Parliament which voted them. He was a King, Frederick declares, "without ostentation and without deceit," and who won by his conduct the confidence of Europe. This latter part of the description is a little too polite. Kings do not criticise each other too keenly in works that are meant for publication. But the words form, on the whole, an epitaph for George which might be inscribed on his tomb without

greater straining of the truth than is common in the monumental inscriptions that adorn the graves of less exalted persons.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### GEORGE THE SECOND

THE year when George the First died was made memorable for ever by the death of a far greater man than any European King of that generation. When describing the events which led to the publication of the "Drapier's Letters," we mentioned the fact that Sir Isaac Newton had been consulted about the coinage of Wood's halfpence. That was the last time that Isaac Newton appeared as a living figure in public controversy of any kind. On March 20, 1727, the great philosopher died, after much suffering, at his house in Kensington. The epitaph which Pope intended for him sums up as well as a long discourse could do his achievements in science—

Nature and Nature's laws lay hid in night;  
God said, "Let Newton be," and all was light.

No other discovery ever made in science approaches in importance to the discovery of the principle of universal gravitation,—the principle that every particle of matter is attracted by every other particle with a force proportioned inversely to the square of their distances. Vague ideas of some such principle had long been floating in the minds of some men; had probably been thus floating since ever men began to think seriously over the phenomena of inanimate nature. But the discovery of the principle was as distinctly the achievement of Newton as "Paradise Lost" is the work of Milton. We find it hard now to form to ourselves any clear idea of a world to which Newton's principle was unknown. It would be almost as easy to realise the idea of a world without light or atmosphere. Newton is called by Sir David Brewster the greatest philosopher of any age.

Sir John Herschel assigns to the name of Newton "a place in our veneration which belongs to no other in the annals of science." In this book we have only to record the date at which the pure and simple life of this great man came to its end. The important events of his career belong to an earlier period ; his teachings and his fame are for all time. The humblest of historians as well as the greatest may ask himself what is the principle of history which bids us to assign so much more space to the wars of kings and the controversies of statesmen than to the life and the deeds of a man like Newton. In the whole history of the world during Newton's lifetime the one most important fact, the one fact of which the magnitude dwarfs all other facts, is the discovery of the principle of gravitation. Yet its meaning may be explained in fewer words than would be needed to describe the nature of the antagonism between Walpole and Pulteney, or the reason why Queen Anne was succeeded by King George.

We have, however, in these pages only to deal with history in its old and, we suppose, its everlasting fashion—that of telling what happened in the way of actual fact, telling the story of the time. The English public took the death of George the First with becoming composure. The vast majority of the people never troubled their heads about it. It gave a flutter of hope to Spain ; it set the councils of the Stuart party in eager commotion for a while ; but it made no change in England. "George the First was always reckoned Vile ; still viler George the Second." These are the lines in which Walter Savage Landor sums up the characters of the first and second Georges before passing on to picture in little the characters of the third and fourth of the name. Landor was not wrong when he described George the Second as, on the whole, rather worse than George the First. George the Second was born at Hanover on October 30, 1683, and was therefore in his forty-fourth year when he succeeded to the throne. He had still less natural capacity than his father. He was parsimonious ; he was avaricious ; he was easily put out of temper. His instincts, feelings, passions, were all purely selfish. He had hot hatreds, and but cool friendships.



Personal courage was, perhaps, the only quality becoming a Sovereign which George the Second possessed. He had served as a volunteer under Marlborough in 1708, and at the battle of Oudenarde he had headed a charge of his Hanoverian dragoons with a bravery worthy of a prince. He is to serve later on at Dettingen, and to be in all probability the last English Sovereign who commanded in person on the battle-field. His education was not even so good as that of his father, and he had an utter contempt for literature. He had little religious feeling, but is said to have had a firm belief in the existence of vampires. He was fond of business—devoted to the small ways of routine. He took a great interest in military matters and all that concerned the arrangements and affairs of an army. Like his father, he found abiding pleasure in the society of a little group of more or less attractive mistresses.

George the Second had always detested his father, and during the greater part of their lives was equally detested by him. The reconciliation which had lately taken place between them was as formal and superficial as that of the two demons described in Le Sage's story. "They brought us together," says Asmodeus; "they reconciled us. We shook hands, and became mortal enemies." When the reconciliation between George the Second and his father was brought about by the influence of Stanhope and of Walpole, the father and son shook hands and continued to be mortal enemies. If George the First had his court at St. James's, George the Second had his court and *coterie* gathered around him at Leicester Fields and at Richmond. The two courts were, in fact, little better than hostile camps. Walpole had been for long years the confidential and favoured servant of George the First. The natural expectation was that he would be instantly discredited and discarded when George the Second came to the throne.

So, indeed, it seemed at first to happen. When Walpole received the news of George the First's death he hastened to Richmond Lodge, where George the Second then was, in order to give him the news and hail him as King. George was in bed, and had to be roused from a thick sleep. He was angry at being disturbed, and not in a

humour to admit that there was any excuse for disturbing him. When Walpole told him that his father was dead the kingly answer of the Sovereign was that the statesman's assertion was a big lie. George roared this at Walpole, and then was for turning round in his bed and settling down to sleep again. Walpole persisted in disturbing the royal slumbers, and assured the drowsy grumbler that he really was George the Second, King of England. He produced for George's further satisfaction a letter from Lord Townshend, describing the time, place, and circumstances of the late King's death. Walpole tendered the usual ceremonial expressions of loyalty, which George received coldly, and even gruffly. Then the Minister asked whom his Majesty wished to appoint to draw up the necessary declaration for the Privy Council. Walpole assumed as a matter of course that the King would leave the task in his hands. George, however, disappointed him. "Compton," said the King; and when he had spoken that word he intimated to Walpole that the interview was over. Walpole left the royal abode believing himself a fallen man.

"Compton," whom the King had thus curtly designated, was Sir Spencer Compton, who had been chosen Speaker of the House of Commons in 1715. He had been one of George the Second's favourites while George was still Prince of Wales. He was a man of respectable character, publicly and privately, but without remarkable capacity of any kind. He knew little or nothing of the business of a Minister, and it is said that when Walpole came to him to tell him of the King's command he frankly acknowledged that he did not know how to draw up the formal declaration. Walpole good-naturedly came to his assistance, took his pen, and did the work for him.

If the King had persevered in his objection to Walpole, the story of the reign would have to be very differently told. Walpole was the only man who could at the time have firmly stood between England and foreign intrigue—between England and financial blunder. Nor is it unlikely that the King would have persevered and refused to admit Walpole to office, but that he happened to be, without his own knowledge, under the influence of the one only woman

who had any legitimate right to influence him—his wife Caroline. Caroline, daughter of a petty German Prince—the Margrave of Brandenburg-Anspach—was one of the most remarkable women of her time. Her faults, foibles, and weaknesses only served to make her more remarkable. She had beauty when she was young, and she still had an expressive face and a sweet smile. She was well educated, and always continued to educate herself; she was fond of letters, art, politics, and metaphysics. She delighted in theological controversy, and also delighted in contests of mere wit. But of all her valuable gifts, the most valuable for herself, and for the country, was the capacity she had for governing her husband. She governed him through his very anxiety not be governed by his wife. One of George's strongest, and at the same time meanest, desires was to let the world see that he was absolute master in his own house, and could rule his wife with a rod of iron. Caroline, having long since discovered this weakness, played into the King's hands, and always made outward show of the utmost deference for his authority and dread of his anger. She put herself metaphorically, and indeed almost literally, under his feet. She was pleased that all the Court should see her thus grovelling. George was in the habit of making jocular allusion, in his jovial, graceful way, to living and dead sovereigns who were governed by their wives, and he often invited his courtiers to notice the difference between them and him, and to admire the imperial supremacy which he exercised over the humble Caroline. By humouring him in this way Caroline obtained, without any consciousness on his part, an almost absolute power over him. Another and a worse failing of the King she humoured as well. She had suffered much in the beginning of her married life because of his amours and his mistresses. Her true and faithful heart had been wrung by long jealousies; but, happily for herself and for the country, she was able at last to rise superior to this natural weakness of woman. Indeed, it has to be said with regret for her self-degradation, that she not only tolerated the love-makings of the King and his favourites, but even showed occasionally a politic interest in the promotion of



the amours and the appointment of the ladies. She humoured her lord and master's avarice with as little scruple. Thus his principal defects—his sordid love of money, his ignoble passion for women, and his ridiculous desire to seem the absolute master of his wife—became in her skilful hands the leading strings by which she drew and guided him whither she would have him go. Through Caroline's influence mainly Walpole was retained in power. She played on the King's avarice, and poured into his greedy ear the assurance that Walpole could raise money as no other living man could. Caroline acted in this chiefly from a sincere love of her husband and anxiety for his good, but partly also, it has to be acknowledged, because it had been made known to her that Walpole would provide her with a larger allowance than it was Compton's intention to do. The result was that Walpole was retained in office, or perhaps it should be said restored to office. The crowds of courtiers who love to worship the rising sun had hardly time to offer their adoration to Compton when they found that the supposed rising sun was only a meteor, which instantly vanished. Horace Walpole the younger describes the event by a happy phrase as "Compton's evaporation." Compton himself had soon found that the responsibility would be too much for him. He besought the King to relieve him of the burden to which he found himself unequal. The King acceded to his wish. Walpole became once again First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Townshend continued to be Secretary of State. The crisis was over.

Parliament assembled on June 15, after the death of George the First. As the law then stood, any Parliament summoned by a Sovereign was not to be dissolved by that Sovereign's death, but should continue to sit and act during a term of six months, "unless the same shall be sooner prorogued or dissolved by such person who shall be next heir to the Crown of this Realm in succession." The meeting of June 15 was merely formal. Parliament was prorogued by a Commission from George the Second until the 27th of the month. Both Houses then met at Westminster,

and the King came to the House of Peers in his royal robes and ascended the throne with all the regular ceremonial. Sir Charles Dalton, Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod, was sent with a message from the King, commanding the attendance of the Commons. When the Commons had crowded into the space appointed for them in the Peers' Chamber, the King "delivered from his own mouth" the royal speech. George the Second had, at all events, one advantage over George the First as a King of England; he understood the language of his subjects, and could speak to them in their own tongue. The royal speech began by expressing the King's persuasion that "you all share with me in my grief and affliction for the death of my late royal father." The King was well warranted in this persuasion; nothing could be more correct than his assumption. The Lords and Commons quite shared with him his grief and affliction for the death of his royal father. They felt just as much distress at that event as he did. The King then went on to declare his fixed resolution to merit by all possible means the love and affection of his people; to preserve the Constitution "as it is now happily established in Church and State"; and to secure to all his subjects the full enjoyment of their religious and civil rights. He expressed his satisfaction at the manner in which tranquillity and the balance of power in Europe had been maintained, the strict union and harmony which had hitherto subsisted among the allies of the Treaty of Hanover, and which had chiefly contributed to the nearest prospect of a general peace. Finally, the King pointed out that the grant of the greatest part of his Civil List revenues had now run out, and that it would be necessary for the House of Commons to make a new provision for the support of him and of his family. "I am persuaded," said the King, "that the experience of past times, and a due regard to the honour and dignity of the Crown, will prevail upon you to give me this first proof of your zeal and affection in a manner answerable to the necessities of my Government." Then the King withdrew, and Lord Chesterfield moved for "an address of condolence, congratulation, and

thanks." The condoling and congratulatory address was unanimously voted, was presented next day to his Majesty, and received his Majesty's most gracious acknowledgment. Meanwhile, the Commons having returned to their House, several new members took the oaths. Sir Paul Methuen, Treasurer of the Household, the author of the commercial treaty with Portugal which still bears his name, moved an address of condolence and congratulation to the King. The motion was seconded by Sir Robert Walpole, and, as the formal record puts it, "voted *nemine contradicente*." A committee was appointed to draw up the address, Sir Robert Walpole, of course, being one of its members. The chairman of the committee paid Walpole the compliment of handing him the pen, "whereupon," as a contemporary account reports it, "Sir Robert, without hesitation, and with a masterly hand, drew up the said address." Walpole could be courtly enough when he thought fit. He seems to have distinctly outdone the House of Lords in the fervour of his grief for the late King and his devotion to the present. The death of George the First Walpole pronounced to be "a loss to this nation which your Majesty alone could possibly repair." Having mentioned the fact that the death of George the First had plunged all England into grief, Walpole changed, "as by the stroke of an enchanter's wand," this winter of our discontent into glorious summer. "Your immediate succession," he assured the King, "banished all our grief."

On Monday, July 3, the Commons met to consider the amount of supply to be granted to his Majesty. Walpole, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, stated to the House that the annual sum of seven hundred thousand pounds granted to the late King, "for the support of his household and of the honour and dignity of the Crown," had fallen short every year, and that Ministers had been obliged to make it up in other ways. The present Sovereign's necessary expenses were likely to increase, the Chancellor of the Exchequer explained, "by reason of the largeness of his family, and the necessity of settling a household for his royal consort." The Chancellor of the Exchequer therefore moved that the entire revenues of the Civil List, which



produced about one hundred and thirty thousand pounds a year above the yearly sum of seven hundred thousand pounds already mentioned, should be settled on his Majesty during life. The motion was supported by several members, but Mr. Shippen, the earnest and able, though somewhat eccentric, Jacobite and Tory, had the spirit and courage to oppose it. Shippen's speech was expressed in a spirit of loyalty, but was direct and incisive in its criticism of the Government proposal. Shippen pointed out that the yearly sum of seven hundred thousand pounds, now thought too little, was not obtained by the late Sovereign without a long and solemn debate, and was described by every one who contended for it as an ample revenue for a King. He reminded the House that Queen Anne used to pay about nineteen thousand pounds a year out of her own pocket for the augmentation of the salaries of poor clergymen, allowed five thousand pounds a year out of the Post-Office revenue to the Duke of Marlborough, gave several hundred thousand pounds for the building of the castle of Blenheim; and by this means came under the necessity of asking Parliament for five hundred thousand pounds, which she determined never to do again, and had therefore prepared a scheme for the reduction of her expenses, which was to bring her full yearly outlay down to four hundred and fifty thousand pounds. Shippen then severely criticised the foreign policy of the late King's reign, and with justice condemned the extravagance which required to be met by repeated grants from the nation. "I confess," he said, "that if the same management was to be continued, and if the same Ministers were to be again employed, a million a year would not be sufficient to carry on the exorbitant expenses so often and so justly complained of in this House." He deplored the vast sum "sunk in the bottomless gulf of secret service." "I heartily wish," he exclaimed, "that time, the great discoverer of hidden truths and concealed iniquities, may produce a list of all such—if any such there were—who have been perverted from their public duty by private pensions, who have been the hired slaves and the corrupt instruments of a profuse and vainglorious Administration."

Shippen concluded by moving as an amendment that the amount granted to his Majesty be the clear yearly sum of seven hundred thousand pounds. It is worth noticing that when Shippen had occasion once to refer to some of Walpole's arguments he spoke of him as "my honourable friend," and then, suddenly correcting himself, said, "I ask pardon; I should have said the honourable person, for there is no friendship betwixt us."

Shippen's speech hit hard, and must have been felt by the Ministry. The one charge against Walpole's Government which he could not refute was the charge of extravagance in corruption. The Ministers, however, affected to treat the speech with contempt, and were justified in doing so by the manner in which the House of Commons dealt with it. No answer was given to Shippen's statements, because Shippen's motion was not seconded and fell to the ground. The resolutions proposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer were carried without a division, and a Bill was ordered to be brought in to give effect to them. A provision of one hundred thousand pounds a year was voted for the Queen, in case she should survive the King. The vote was agreed to without division or debate. Parliament was dissolved by proclamation on August 7.

The new Parliament met on January 23, 1728. It was found that the ministerial majority was even greater than it had been before. The King opened Parliament in person, and directed the Commons, who had been summoned to the House of Peers, to return to their own House and choose their Speaker. The Commons unanimously chose Arthur Onslow to this high office. Compton, the former Speaker, had been soothed with a peerage after his "evaporation." Arthur Onslow was born in 1691, and had been in Parliament from 1719; in July 1728 he was made Privy Councillor. We may anticipate events a little for the purpose of mentioning the fact that all the writers of his time united in ascribing to Speaker Onslow, as he has always since been called, a combination of the best attributes which fit a man to preside over the House of Commons. It is said that his election to the Speaker's chair was brought about mainly by Sir Robert Walpole, and that

Walpole expected Onslow to use his great abilities and authority to suit the policy and serve the wishes of the Administration. If this was Walpole's idea, he must soon have found himself as much mistaken as the conclave of Cardinals about whom so much is said in history, romance, and the drama, who elected one of their order as Pope because they believed him to be too feeble and nerveless to have any will of his own, and were much amazed to find that the moment the new Pope had been elected he suddenly became strong and energetic—the master, and not the servant. Onslow's whole conduct in the Chair of the House of Commons during the many years in which he occupied it displayed an absolute and fearless impartiality. The Chair has never been better filled in English history; the very title of "Speaker Onslow," ever afterwards given to him, is of itself a tribute to his impartiality and his services. Onslow was a man who loved letters and art, and also, it is said, loved studying all varieties of life. It is reported of him that he used to go about disguised, like a sort of eighteenth-century Haroun al-Raschid, amongst the lowest classes of men, in out-of-the-way parts of the capital, for the purpose of studying the forms and manners of human life. Legend has preserved the memory of a certain public-house, called "The Jews' Harp," where Onslow is said to have amused himself many an evening sitting in the chimney-corner and exchanging talk and jests with the company who frequented the place. It is pleasant to be able to believe these stories of Speaker Onslow in that highly artificial and formal age—that age of periwigs, and paint, and shallow formulas. It is somewhat refreshing to meet with this clever man of eccentric ways, the great "Speaker," who could wear his official robes with so much true dignity, and then, when he had laid them aside, could amuse himself after his own fashion, and study life in some of its queerest corners with the freshness of a schoolboy and the eye of an artist.



## CHAPTER XIX

## "THE PATRIOTS."

THE name and the career of William Pulteney are all but forgotten in English political life. It is doubtful whether Pulteney's name, if pronounced in the course of a debate in the House of Commons just now, would bring with it any manner of idea to the minds of nine tenths of the listening members. Yet Pulteney played, all unconsciously, a great part in the development of the parliamentary life of this country. So far as intellectual gifts are concerned, he is not, of course, to be named in the same breath with a man like Burke, for example; one might as well think of comparing Offenbach with Mozart or Handel. But the influence of the career of Pulteney on the English Parliament is nevertheless more distinctly marked than the influence of the career of Burke. We are speaking now not of political thought—no man ever made a greater impression on political thought than Burke has done—but only of the forms and the development of English Parliamentary systems. For Pulteney was beyond all question the founder of the modern practice of Parliamentary Opposition. Walpole was mainly instrumental in transferring the seat of political power from the House of Lords to the House of Commons. Never, since Walpole's time, has the House of Lords exercised any real influence over the political life of England. This was not Walpole's doing; it was the doing of time and change, of altered conditions and new forces. But Walpole saw the coming change, and bent all the energies of his robust intellect to help and forward it. Pulteney is in the same sense the author of the modern principle of Parliamentary Opposition; but there is no reason to believe that Pulteney saw what he was doing as clearly as Walpole did. Until the beginning of Pulteney's brilliant career, the opposition between parties had been mainly a competition for the ear and the favour of the Sovereign. Thus Harley strove against

Marlborough, and Bolingbroke against Harley, and the Whigs against Harley and Bolingbroke. But the course of action taken by Pulteney against Walpole converted the struggle into one of party against party, inside and outside of the House of Commons. The object sought was the command of a majority in the representative assembly. Pulteney showed how this was to be obtained by the voices of the public out of doors as well as by the votes of the elected representatives in Westminster. Walpole had made it clear that in the House of Commons the battle was to be fought; Pulteney showed that in the House of Commons the victory was to be gained, not by the favour of the Sovereign, but by the co-operation of the people.

We have said in a former chapter that Pulteney's form of procedure, become now a component part of our whole Parliamentary system, brings with it some serious disadvantages from which, for the present, it is not easy, it is not even possible, to see any way of escape. The principle of government by party will some time or other come to be put to the challenge in English political life. For the present, however, we have only to make the best we can of it; and no one in his senses can doubt that it was an immense advance on the system of back-stairs influence and bedchamber intrigue, the policy, to use the great Condé's expression, "of petticoats and alcoves," which prevailed in the days when Mrs. Masham was competing with Sarah Jennings, and, later still, when Walpole was buying his way back to power through the influence of the Sovereign's wife, in co-operation with the Sovereign's paramour.

The student of English history will have to turn with close attention to the reigns of the First and Second Georges. In those reigns the transfer of power to the representative chamber began, and the modern system of Parliamentary opposition grew into form. The student will have to remember that the time he is studying was one when there was no such thing known in England as a public meeting. There were "demonstrations," as we call them now; there were crowds; there were processions; there were tumults; there were disturbances, riots, reading of Riot Acts, dispersion of mobs, charges of cavalry, *fusil-*

*lades* of infantry; but there were no great public meetings called together for the discussion of momentous political questions. The rapid growth of the popular newspaper, soon to swell up like the prophet's gourd, had hardly begun as yet. We cannot call "The Craftsman" a newspaper; it was rather a series of pamphlets. It stood Pulteney in stead of the more modern newspaper. He worked on public opinion with it outside the House of Commons. Inside the House he made it his business to form a party which should assail the Ministry on all points, lie in wait to find occasion for attacking it, attack it rightly or wrongly, attack it even at the risk of exposing national weakness or bringing on national danger, keep attacking it always. In former days a leader of Opposition had often been disdainful of the opinion of the vulgar herd out of doors; Pulteney and his companions set themselves to appeal especially to the prejudices, passions, and ignorance of the vulgar herd. They made it their business to create a public opinion of their own. They dealt in the manufacture of public opinion. They set up political shops wherein to retail the article which they had thus manufactured. Pulteney was now in his prime—still some years inside fifty. He was full of energy and courage, and he threw his whole soul into his work. Much of what he did was undoubtedly dictated by his spite against Walpole, but much, too, was the mere outcome of his ambition, his energy, and the peculiar character of his intellect. He enjoyed playing a conspicuous part and he liked attacking somebody. People used to think at one time that Mr. Disraeli had a profound personal hatred for Sir Robert Peel when he was flinging off his philippics against that great Minister. It afterwards appeared clear enough that Mr. Disraeli had no particular dislike to his opponent, but that he enjoyed attacking an important statesman. Pulteney, of course, did actually begin his career of embittered opposition because of his quarrel with Walpole; but it is likely enough that even if no quarrel had ever taken place and he never had been Walpole's friend and colleague, he would sooner or later have become the foremost gladiator of opposition all the same.



The materials of opposition consisted of three political groups of men. There were the Jacobites, under Shippen; the Tories who no longer acknowledged themselves Jacobites, and who were led by Sir William Wyndham; and there were the discontented Whigs whom Pulteney led and whose discontent he turned to his own uses. It had long been a scheme of Bolingbroke's—up to this time it should perhaps rather be called a dream than a scheme—to combine these three groups into one distinct party, having its bond of union in a common detestation of Walpole. The dream now seemed likely to become a successful scheme. The conception of this plan of opposition was unquestionably Bolingbroke's and not Pulteney's; but it fell to Pulteney's lot to work it out in the House of Commons, and he performed his task with consummate ability. Pulteney was probably the greatest leader of Opposition ever known in the House of Commons, with the single exception of Mr. Disraeli. Charles Fox, with all his splendid genius for debate, was not a skilful or a patient leader of Opposition. Perhaps he was too great of heart for such a part; certain it is that as a leader of Opposition he made some fatal mistakes. Pulteney seemed cut out for the part which a strange combination of chances had allowed him to play. He was not merely a debater of inexhaustible resource and a master of all the trick and craft of Parliamentary leadership; but he thoroughly understood the importance of public support out of doors, and the means of getting at it and retaining it. Pulteney saw that the time had come when the English people would have their say in every political question.

By the combined influence of Pulteney and Bolingbroke, there was formed a party of ultra-Whigs, who, somewhat audaciously, called themselves "The Patriots." Perhaps the title was first given to them by Walpole, in contempt; if so, they accepted and adopted it. Again and again in our history this phenomenon presents itself. Some men of ability and unsatisfied ambition belonging to the Liberal party become discontented with the policy of their leaders. When the first opportunity arises, they make a public declaration against that policy. In the Conservative ranks

there are to be found some other men, also able and also discontented, to whom the general policy of Opposition seems unsatisfactory and feeble. Each of these discontented parties fancies itself to be truly patriotic, public-spirited, and independent. The two factions at length unite for the common good of the country; they tell the world that they are patriots, that they are the only patriots, and the world for a while believes them. This was the condition of things when Pulteney, in Parliament, joined with Sir William Wyndham, the Wyndham who is mentioned in Pope's poem about his Twickenham grotto, the Wyndham with whom Bolingbroke corresponded for many years, and to whom he addressed one of his most important political manifestoes. Sir William Wyndham belonged to an old Somersetshire family. He was a staunch Tory. He had powerful connections; his first wife was a daughter of the haughty Duke of Somerset. He entered Parliament and made a considerable figure there. He had been Secretary at War and afterwards Chancellor of the Exchequer under the Tories; he had clung to Bolingbroke's fortunes at the time of Bolingbroke's rupture with Harley. He underwent the common fate of Tory statesmen on the accession of George the First; he was deprived of office, was accused of taking part in the Jacobite conspiracy, and was committed to the Tower. There was, however, no evidence against him, and he resumed his political career. His eloquence is described by Speaker Onslow as "strong, full, and without affectation, arising chiefly from his clearness, propriety, and argumentation; in the method of which last, by a sort of induction almost peculiar to himself, he had a force beyond any man I ever heard in public debates." Lord Hervey, who can be trusted not to overdo the praise of any one, says of Wyndham that "he was very far from having first-rate parts, but by a gentleman-like general behaviour, constant attendance in the House of Commons, a close application to the business of it, and frequent speaking, he had got a sort of Parliamentary routine, and without being a bright speaker was a popular one, well heard, and useful to his party." So far as we now can

judge, this seems a very correct estimate of Wyndham's parliamentary capacity and position. He had a noble presence, singularly graceful and charming manners, and a high personal character. A combination between such a man as Pulteney and such a man as Wyndham could not but be formidable even to the most powerful Minister.

Shippen, the leader of the Jacobites, "honest Shippen," as Pope calls him, we have often met already. He was a straightforward, unselfish man, absolutely given up to his principles and his party. He was well read, and had written clever pamphlets and telling satirical verses. His speeches, or such reports of them as can be got at, are full of striking passages and impressive phrases; they are speeches which even now one cannot read without interest. But it would seem that Shippen often marred the effect of his ideas and his language by a rapid, careless, and imperfect delivery. He appears to have been one of the men who wanted nothing but a clear articulation and effective utterance to be great parliamentary debaters, and whom that single want condemned to comparative failure. Those who remember the late Sir George Cornwall Lewis, or those who have heard the best speeches of Lord Sherbrooke when he was Mr. Robert Lowe, can probably form a good idea of what Shippen was as a parliamentary debater. Shippen was nothing of a statesman, and his occasional eccentricities of manner and conduct prevented him from obtaining all the influence which would otherwise have been fairly due to his talents and his political and personal integrity.

Pulteney's party had in Parliament the frequent, indeed for a time the habitual, assistance of Wyndham and of Shippen. Outside Parliament Bolingbroke intrigued, wrote, and worked with the indomitable energy and restless craving for activity and excitement which, despite all his professions of love for philosophic quiet, had been his lifelong characteristic. "The Craftsman" was stimulated and guided much more directly by his inspiration than even by that of Pulteney. "The Craftsman" kept showering out articles, letters, verses, epigrams, all intended to damage the Ministry, and more especially to destroy the



reputation of Walpole. All was fish that came into "The Craftsman's" net. Every step taken by the Government, no matter what it might be, was made an occasion for ridicule, denunciation, and personal abuse. Not the slightest scruple was shown in the management of "The Craftsman." If the policy of the Government seemed to tend towards a Continental war, "The Craftsman" cried out for peace, and vituperated the Minister who dared to think of involving England in the trumpery quarrels of foreign States. Walpole, however, we need hardly say, made it a set purpose of his administration to maintain peace on the Continent; and as soon as the patriots began to find out in each particular instance that his policy was still the same, they turned round and shrieked against the Minister whose feebleness and cowardice were laying England at the feet of foreign alliances and Continental despots. Walpole worked in cordial alliance with the French Government, the principal member of which was now Cardinal Fleury. It became the object of "The Craftsman" to hold Walpole up to contempt and derision, as the dupe of a French Cardinal and the sycophant of a French Court. The example of "The Craftsman" was speedily followed by pamphleteers, caricaturists, satirists, and even balladmongers without end. London and the provinces were flooded with such literature. Walpole was described "as Sir Blue String," the blue string being a cheap satirical allusion to the blue ribbon which was supposed to adorn him as Knight of the Garter. He was styled Sir Robert Brass, Sir Robert Lynn, more often simple "Robin" or plain "Bob." He was pictured as a systematic promoter of public corruption, as one who fattened on the taxation wrung from the miserable English taxpayer. His personal character, his domestic life, his household expenses, the habits of his wife, his own social and other enjoyments, were coarsely criticised and lampooned. "The Craftsman" and its imitators attacked not only Walpole himself, but Walpole's friends. The political satire of that day was as indiscriminate as it was unsparing. It was enough to be a political or even a personal friend of Walpole to become the object of "The Craftsman's" fierce blows. Pulteney did not even

scruple to betray the confidence of private conversation, and to disclose the words which, in some unguarded moments of former friendship, Walpole had spoken of George the Second when George was Prince of Wales.

An excellent opportunity was soon given to Pulteney to make an open and a damaging attack on the Ministry. Horace Walpole, British Ambassador to the French Court, had been brought over from Paris to explain and justify his brother's foreign policy. The Government put forward a resolution in the House of Commons on February 7, 1729, for a grant of some two hundred and fifty thousand pounds "for defraying the expense of twelve thousand Hessians taken into his Majesty's pay." Even if the maintenance of this force had been a positive necessity, which it certainly was not, it would, nevertheless, have been a necessity bringing with it disparagement and danger to the Government responsible for it. Pulteney made the most of the opportunity, and in a speech of fine old English flavour denounced the proposal of the Ministers. He asked with indignation whether Englishmen were not brave enough or willing enough to defend their own country without calling in the assistance of foreign mercenaries. It might, he admitted, be some advantage to Hanover that German soldiers should be kept in the pay of England, but he wanted to know what benefit could come to the English people from paying and maintaining such a band. These men were kept, he declared, in the pay of England, not for the service of England, but for the service of Hanover. It need hardly be said that, during all the earlier years of the Brunswick accession, a bare allusion to the name of Hanover was enough to stir an angry feeling in the minds of the larger number of the English people. Even the very men who most loyally supported the House of Brunswick winced and writhed under any allusion to the manner in which the interests of England were made subservient to the interests of Hanover. Pulteney therefore took every pains to chafe those sore places with remorseless energy. Sir William Wyndham supported Pulteney, and Sir Robert Walpole himself found it necessary to throw all his influence into the scale on the other side. His arguments were

of a kind with which the House of Commons has been familiar during many generations. His main point was, that by maintaining a large body of soldiers, Hessian amongst the rest, the country had been enabled to avoid war. The Court of Vienna, with the assistance of Spanish subsidies, had been making preparation for war, Walpole contended; and were it not for the maintenance of this otherwise superfluous body of troops, the Emperor of Austria would probably never have accepted the terms of peace. "If you desire peace, prepare for war," may be an excellent maxim, but its value lies a good deal in its practical application. It is a remarkably elastic maxim, and in times nearer to our own than those of Walpole has been made to expand into a justification of the most extravagant and unnecessary military armaments, and of schemes of fortification which afterwards were abandoned before they had been half realised. In this instance, however, there was something more to be said against the proposal of the Government. Some of the speakers in the debate pointed out that England in former days, if it engaged in a quarrel with its neighbours, fought the quarrel out with its own strength, and was not in the habit of buying and maintaining the forces of foreign princes to help Englishmen to hold their own. The resolution, of course, was carried. It was even carried by an overwhelming majority; 256 were on the "court side," as it was called, against 91 on the "country side." Fifty thousand pounds was also voted as "one year's subsidy to the King of Sweden," and twenty-five thousand pounds for one year's subsidy to the Duke of Brunswick. In order to appease the consciences of some of those who supported the resolution as well as those who had opposed it, the Government permitted what we should now call a "rider" to be added to the resolution requesting his Majesty that whenever it should be necessary to take any foreign troops into his service, "he will be graciously pleased to use his endeavours that they be clothed with the manufactures of Great Britain." It was supposed to be some solace to the wounded national pride of Englishmen to be assured that if they had to pay foreigners to fight for them the foreigners



should at least not be allowed to come to this country clothed in the manufactures of their own land, but would be compelled to buy their garments over the counter of an English shop.

On Friday, February 21, an event which led directly and indirectly to results of some importance occurred. Three petitions from the merchants trading in tobacco in London, Bristol, and Liverpool were presented to the House of Commons. These petitions complained of great interruptions for several years past of the trade with the British colonies in America by the Spaniards. The depredations of the Spanish, it was said, endangered the entire loss of that valuable trade to England. The Spaniards were accused of having treated such of his Majesty's subjects as had fallen into their hands in a barbarous and cruel manner. The petitioners prayed for the consideration of the House of Commons, and such timely remedy as the House should think fit to recommend. These petitions only preceded a great many others, all in substance to the same effect. The Commons entered upon the consideration of the subject in a Committee of the whole House, heard several petitioners, and examined many witnesses. An address was presented to the Crown, asking for copies of all memorials, petitions, and representations to the late King or the present, in relation to Spanish captures of British ships. Copies were also asked for of the reports laid before the King by the commissioners of trade and of plantations, concerning the dispute between England and Spain, with regard to the rights of the subjects of Great Britain to cut logwood in the Bay of Campeachy, on the western shore of that Yucatan peninsula which juts into the Gulf of Mexico. English traders had been for a long time in the habit of cutting logwood along the shores in the Bay of Campeachy, and the logwood trade had come to be one of the greatest importance to the West Indies and to England. The Spanish Government claimed the right to put a stop to this cutting of logwood, and the Spanish Viceroy and Governor had in some instances declared that they would dislodge the Englishmen from the settlements which they had established, and even treat

them as pirates if they persisted in their trade. There was, in fact, all the material growing up for a serious quarrel between England and Spain.

Despite the recent treaties which were supposed to secure the peace of Europe, the times were very critical. "The British nation," says a contemporary writer, "had for many years past been in a state of uncertainty, scarce knowing friends from foes, or indeed whether we had either." Each new treaty seemed only to disturb the balance of power, as it was called, in a new way. The Quadruple Alliance was intended to rectify the defects of the Treaty of Utrecht; but it gave too much power to the Emperor, and it increased the bitterness and the discontent of the King of Spain. The Treaty of Vienna, made between the Empire and Spain, was justly regarded in England as portending danger to this country. It was even more dangerous than Englishmen in general supposed at the time, although Walpole knew its full purport and menace. The Treaty of Vienna led to the Treaty of Hanover, an arrangement made in the closing years of George the First's reign, between Great Britain, France, and Prussia, by virtue of which if any one of the contracting parties were to be attacked, the other two were pledged to come to its assistance with funds and with arms. All these arrangements were in the highest degree artificial; some of them might fairly be described as unnatural. It might be taken for granted that not one of the States whom they professed to bind to this side or to that would hold to the engagements one hour longer than would serve her own interests. No safety was secured by these overlapping treaties; no one had any faith in them. It was quite true that England did not know her friends from her enemies about the time at which we have now arrived.

The dispute between England and Spain concerning the question of the Campeachy logwood was to involve a controversy as to the interpretation of certain passages in the Treaty of Utrecht. It was distinctly a matter for calm consideration, for compromise, and for an amicable settlement. But each of the two parties mainly concerned showed its desire to push its own claim to an extreme.

English traders have never been particularly moderate or considerate in pressing their supposed rights to trade with foreign countries. In this instance they were strongly backed up, encouraged, and stimulated by the band of Englishmen who chose to call themselves the "Patriots." Few of the "Patriots," we venture to think, cared a rush about the question of the Campeachy logwood, or were very deeply grieved because Spain bore herself in a high-handed fashion towards certain English merchants and shipowners. But the opportunity seemed to the "Patriots" admirably adapted for worrying and harassing, not the Spaniards, but the Administration of Sir Robert Walpole. They used the opportunity to the very full. The debates on the conduct of Spain brought out in the House of Lords the acknowledgment of the fact that King George I. had at one time actually written to the Government of Spain distinctly undertaking to bring about the restitution of Gibraltar. A copy of the letter in French, with a translation, was laid before the House. It seemed that on June 1, 1721, George, the late King, wrote to the King of Spain, "Sir my brother," a letter concerning the treaties then in the course of being re-established between England and Spain. In that letter occurred these words: "I do no longer balance to assure your Majesty of my readiness to satisfy you with regard to your demand touching the restitution of Gibraltar; promising you to make use of the first favourable opportunity to regulate this article with the consent of my Parliament." The House of Lords had a long and warm debate on this subject. A resolution was proposed declaring that "for the honour of his Majesty, and the preservation and security of the trade and commerce of this kingdom," care should be taken "that the King of Spain do renounce all claim and pretension to Gibraltar and the island of Minorca, in plain and strong terms." This resolution, however, was thought in the end to be rather too strong, and it was modified into a declaration that the Lords "do entirely rely upon his Majesty, that he will, for the maintaining the honour and securing the trade of this kingdom, take effectual care in the present treaty to preserve his undoubted right to Gibraltar and the



island of Minorca." This resolution was communicated to the House of Commons, and the Lords asked for a conference with that House in the Painted Chamber. The Commons had a long debate on the subject. The Opposition strongly denounced the Ministers who had advised the late King to write such a letter, and declared that it implied a positive promise to surrender Gibraltar to Spain. The courtiers, as the supporters of the Ministry were then called, to distinguish them from the country party—that is to say, the Opposition—endeavoured to qualify and make light of the expressions used in the late King's letter, to show that they were merely hypothetical and conditional, and insisted that effectual care had since been taken in every way to maintain the right of England to Gibraltar. The country party moved that words be added to the Lords' resolution requiring "that all pretensions on the part of the Crown of Spain to the said places be specifically given up." Two hundred and sixty-seven votes, against one hundred and eleven, refused the addition of these words as unnecessary, and too much in the nature of a challenge and defiance to Spain. But the motion that "this House does agree with the Lords in the said resolution" was carried without a division, the court party not venturing to offer any objection to it. The King received the address of both Houses on Tuesday, March 25, and returned an answer thanking them for the confidence reposed in him, and assuring them that "I will take effectual care, as I have hitherto done, to secure my undoubted right to Gibraltar and the island of Minorca."

The difficulty was over for the present. The Government contrived to arrange a new treaty with Spain, the Treaty of Seville, in which France also was included. This treaty settled for the time the disputes about English trade with the New World, and the claims of Spain for a restoration of Gibraltar were, indirectly at least, given up. Perhaps the whole story is chiefly interesting now as affording an illustration of the manner in which the Patriots turned everything to account for their one great purpose of harassing the Administration of Sir Robert Walpole. All the patriotic effusiveness about the undoubted right of

England to Gibraltar was merely well-painted passion. Such sentiment as exists in the English mind with regard to the possession of "the Rock" now, did not exist, had not had time to come into existence, then. Gibraltar was taken in 1704; its possession was confirmed to England by the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713. Since that time English Ministers had again and again been considering the expediency of restoring Gibraltar to the Spaniards. Stanhope had been in favour of the restoration; Townshend and Carteret had been in favour of it. Some of the Patriots themselves, before they came to be dubbed Patriots, had been in favour of it. Only the unreasonable and insolent behaviour of Spain herself stood at one time in the way of the restitution. Gibraltar was one capture, like many others; captured territory changed and changed hands with each new arrangement in those days. Minorca, which was included with Gibraltar in the resolution of the two Houses of Parliament and the consequent promise of the King, was taken by the English forces shortly after the capture of Gibraltar, and was settled upon England by the same Treaty of Utrecht. Yet, as we all know, it was given up by England at the Peace of Amiens, and no tears of grief were shed by any English eyes. But the discovery that the late King had at one time been willing to restore Gibraltar to Spain for a consideration came in most opportunely for the Patriots. To most of them it was, of course, no discovery at all. They had always known of the intention, and some of them had approved of it. None the less shrill were their cries of surprise; none the less vociferous their shouts of patriotic anger.

## CHAPTER XX

### A VICTORY FOR THE PATRIOTS

LITERATURE lost some great names in the early part of George the Second's reign. William Congreve and Richard Steele both died in 1729. Congreve's works do

not belong to the time of which we are writing. He was not sixty years old when he died, and he had long ceased to take any active part in literature. Swift deplores, in a letter to an acquaintance, "the death of our friend Mr. Congreve, whom I loved from my youth, and who surely, besides his other talents, was a very agreeable companion." Swift adds that Congreve "had the misfortune to squander away a very good constitution in his younger days," and "upon his own account I could not much desire the continuance of his life under so much pain and so many infirmities." Congreve was beyond comparison the greatest English comic dramatist of his time. Since the days of Ben Jonson and until the days of Sheridan there was no one who could fairly be compared with him. His comedy was not in the least like the bold, broad, healthy, Aristophanic humour of Ben Jonson; the two stand better in contrast than in comparison. Jonson drew from the whole living English world of his time; Congreve drew from the men and women whom he had seen in society. Congreve took society as he found it in his earlier days. The men and women with whom he then mixed were for the most part flippant, insincere, corrupt, and rather proud of their corruption; and Congreve filled his plays with figures very lifelike for such a time. He has not drawn many men or women whom one could admire. Even his heroines, if they are chaste in their lives, are anything but pure in their conversation, and seem to have no moral principle beyond that which is represented by what Heine calls an "anatomical chastity." Angelica, the heroine of "Love for Love," is evidently meant by Congreve to be all that a charming young Englishwoman ought to be; and she is charming, fresh, and fascinating even still. But she occasionally talks in a manner which would be a little strong for a barrack-room now; and nothing gives her more genuine delight than to twit her kind, fond old uncle with his wife's infidelities, to make it clear to him that all the world is acquainted with the full particulars of his shame, and to sport with his jealous agonies. Congreve was the first dramatic author who put an English seaman on the stage; and, after his characteristic fashion, he made



his Ben Legend a selfish, coarse, and ruffianly lout. But if one cannot admire many of Congreve's characters, on the other hand one cannot help admiring every sentence they speak. The only fault to be found with their talk is that it is too witty, too brilliant, for any manner of real life. Society would have to be all composed of male and female Congreves to make such conversation possible. There is more strength, originality, and depth in it than even in the conversation in "The Rivals" and "The School for Scandal." The same fault has been found with Sheridan which is to be found with Congreve. We need not make too much of it. No warning example is called for. There will never be many dramatists whose dialogue will deserve the censure of critics on the ground that it is too witty.

Of Steele we have often had occasion to speak. His fame has been growing rather than fading with time. At one period he was ranked by critics as far below the level of Addison; few men now would not set him on a pedestal as high. He was more natural, more simple, more fresh than Addison. There is some justice in the remark of Hazlitt that "Steele seems to have gone into his closet chiefly to set down what he had observed out of doors"; while Addison appears "to have spent most of his time in his study," spinning out to the utmost there the hints "which he borrowed from Steele or took from nature." Every one, however, will cordially say, with Hazlitt, "I am far from wishing to depreciate Addison's talents, but I am anxious to do justice to Steele." There are not many names in English literature round which a greater affection clings than that of Steele. Leigh Hunt, in writing of Congreve, speaks of "the love of the highest aspirations" which he sometimes displays, and which makes us think of what he might have been under happier and purer auspices. Leigh Hunt refers in especial to Congreve's essay in "The Tatler" on the character of Lady Elizabeth Hastings, whom Congreve calls Aspasia—"an effusion so full of enthusiasm for the moral graces, and worded with an appearance of sincerity so cordial, that we can never read it without thinking it must have come from Steele." "It is in this essay," Leigh Hunt goes on, "that he says one of

the most elegant and truly loving things that were ever uttered by an unworldly passion: 'To love her is a liberal education.'" Leigh Hunt's critical judgment was better than his information. The words "to love her is a liberal education" are by Steele, and not by Congreve. They do not appear in the essay by Congreve on the character of Lady Elizabeth Hastings, but in a subsequent essay by Steele, in which, after a fashion common enough in "The Tatler" and "The Spectator," one author takes up some figure created or described by another, and gives it new touches and commends it afresh to the reader. Steele was doing this with Congreve's picture of Aspasia, and it was then that he crowned the whole work by the exquisite and immortal words which Leigh Hunt could never read without thinking they must have come from the man who was in fact their author.

If literature had its losses in these years, it had also its gains. Not long before the time at which we have now arrived English literature had achieved three great successes. Pope wrote the first three books of his "Dunciad," Swift published his "Gulliver's Travels," and Gay set the town wild with his "Beggar's Opera." We are far from any thought of classifying the "Beggar's Opera" as a work of art on a level with the "Dunciad" or "Gulliver's Travels," but in its way it is a masterpiece. It is thoroughly original, fresh, and vivid. It added one or two distinctly new figures to the humorous drama. It is clever as a satire and charming as a story. One cannot be surprised that when it had the attraction of novelty the public raved about it. To say anything about "Gulliver's Travels" or the "Dunciad," except to note the historical fact that each was published, would of course be mere superfluity and waste of words.

In 1731 the first steps were taken in a reform of some importance in the literature of our legal procedure. It was arranged that English should be substituted for Latin in the presentments, indictments, pleadings, and all other documents used in our courts of law. The early stages of this most wise and needful reform were met with much opposition by lawyers and pedants. One main argument

employed in favour of the retention of the old system was that, if the language of our legal documents were to be changed, no man would be at the pains of studying Latin any more, and that in a few years no one would be able to read a word of some of our own most valuable historical records. It was mildly suggested on the other side that there would always be some men among us who "either out of curiosity or for the sake of gain" would make it their business to keep up the knowledge of Latin, and that a very few of such antiquaries would suffice to give the country all the information drawn from Latin records which it could possibly require or care to have. We have had some experience since that time, and it does not appear that the disuse of Latin in our legal documents has led to its falling into absolute disuse among reading men. There are still among us, and apparently will always be, persons who "either out of curiosity or for the sake of gain" keep up their knowledge of Latin. The curiosity to read Virgil, and Horace, and Cicero, and Cæsar in the tongue which those authors employed is more keen than it ever was before. Men indulge themselves freely in it, even without reference to the sake of gain.

Meanwhile a change long foreseen by those who were in the inner political circles was rapidly approaching. The combination between Walpole and his brother-in-law, Lord Townshend, was about to be broken up. It had for a long time been a question whether it was to be the firm of Townshend and Walpole, or Walpole and Townshend; and of late years the question was becoming settled. If the firm was to endure at all, it must clearly be Walpole and Townshend. Walpole had been growing every day in power and influence. The King, as well as the Queen, treated him openly and privately as the head of the Government. Townshend saw this, and felt bitterly aggrieved. He had for a long time been a much more powerful personage socially than Walpole, and he could not bear with patience the supremacy which Walpole was all too certainly obtaining. Great part of that supremacy was due to Walpole's superiority of talents; but something was due also to the fact that the House of Commons was



becoming a much more important assembly than the House of Lords. The result was inevitable. Townshend for a long time struggled against it. He tried to intrigue against Walpole; he did his best to ingratiate himself with the King. He was a man of austere character and stainless life; but he seems, nevertheless, to have tried at one time the merest arts of the political intriguer to supplant his brother-in-law in the favour and confidence of the King. Perhaps he might have succeeded—it is at least possible—but for the watchful intelligence of Queen Caroline. She saw through all Townshend's schemes, and took care that they should not succeed. At last the two rivals quarrelled. Their quarrel broke out very openly, in the drawing-room of a lady, and in the presence of several distinguished persons. From hot words they were going on to a positive personal struggle, when the spectators at last intervened to "pluck them asunder," in the words of the King in "Hamlet." They were plucked asunder, and then there was talk of a duel. The friends of both succeeded in preventing this scandal, but the brothers-in-law were never thoroughly reconciled, and after a short time Lord Townshend resigned his office. He withdrew from public life altogether, and devoted his remaining years to the enjoyment of the country and the practical study of agriculture. It is to his credit that when once he had given way to the superior influence of Walpole, he did not afterwards cabal against him, or try to injure him, according to the fashion of the statesmen of the time. On the contrary, when he was pressed to join in an attack on Walpole's Ministry, he firmly refused to do anything of the kind. He said he had resolved to take no further part in political contests, and he did not mean to break his resolution. He was particularly determined not to depart from his resolve in this case, he explained, because his temper was hot, and he was apprehensive that he might be hurried away by personal resentment to take a course which in his cooler moments he should have to regret. Nothing in his public life, perhaps, became him so well as his dignified conduct in his retirement. His place in history is not strongly marked; in this history we shall not hear of him any more.

Colonel Stanhope, who had made the Treaty of Seville, and had been raised to the peerage as Lord Harrington for his services, succeeded Townshend as Secretary of State. Horace Walpole, the brother of Robert, was at his own request recalled from Paris. Walpole, the Prime Minister, had begun to see that it would be necessary for the future to have something like a good understanding with Austria. The friendship with France had been a priceless advantage in its time, but Walpole believed that it had served its turn. It was valuable to England chiefly because it had enabled the Sovereign to keep the movements of the Stuart party in check, and Walpole hoped that the House of Hanover was now secure on the throne, and believed, with too sanguine a confidence, that no other effort would be made to disturb it. Moreover, he saw some reason to think that France, no longer guided by the political intelligence of a man like the Duke of Orleans, was drawing a little too close in her relationship with Spain. Walpole was already looking forward to the coming of a time when it might be necessary for England to strengthen herself against France and Spain, and he therefore desired to get into a good understanding with the Emperor and Austria.

Walpole now had the Government entirely to himself. He was not merely all-powerful in the Administration, he actually was the Administration. The King knew him to be indispensable; the Queen put the fullest trust in him. His only trouble was with the intrigues of Bolingbroke and the opposition of Pulteney. The latter sometimes affected what would have been called at the time a "mighty unconcern" about political affairs. Writing once to Pope, he says, "Mrs. Pulteney is now in labour; if she does well and brings me a boy, I shall not care one sixpence how much longer Sir Robert governs England, or Horace governs France." This was written while Horace Walpole was still Ambassador at the French Court. Pulteney, however, was very far from feeling anything like the philosophical indifference which he expressed in his letter to Pope. He never ceased to attack everything done by the Ministry, and to satirise every word said by Walpole. At the same time Pulteney was complaining bitterly to his friends of the

attacks made on him by the supporters of Walpole. On February 9, 1730, he wrote a letter to Swift in which he says that "certain people" had been driven by want of argument "to that last resort of calling names; villain, traitor, seditious rascal, and such ingenious appellations have frequently been bestowed on a couple of friends of yours." "Such usage," he complacently adds, "has made it necessary to return the same polite language; and there has been more Billingsgate stuff uttered from the press within these two months than ever was known before." Swift himself had previously written to his friend Dr. Sheridan a letter in which he declared that "Walpole is peevish and disconcerted, stoops to the vilest offices of hireling scoundrels to write Billingsgate of the lowest and most prostitute kind, and has none but beasts and blockheads for his penmen, whom he pays in ready guineas very liberally." One would have thought that beasts and blockheads could hardly prove very formidable enemies to Swift and Bolingbroke and Pulteney.

One of the incidents in the controversy carried on by the Ministerial penmen and "The Craftsman" was a duel between Pulteney and Lord Hervey. Pulteney and his friends were apparently under the impression that they had a right to a monopoly of personal abuse, and they resented any effusion of the kind from the other side as a breach of their privilege. Hervey had written a tract called "Sedition and Defamation displayed; in a Letter to the Author of 'The Craftsman'"; and this led to a new outburst of passion on both sides. Pulteney stigmatised Hervey, on account of his effeminate appearance, as a thing that was half man, half woman, and a duel took place, in which Hervey was wounded. Hervey was a remarkable man. His physical frame was as feeble as that of Voltaire. He suffered from epilepsy and a variety of other ailments. He had to live mainly on a dietary of ass's milk. His face was so meagre and so pallid, or rather livid, that he used to paint and make up like an actress or a fine lady. Pope, who might have been considerate to the weak of frame, was merciless in his ridicule of Hervey. He ridiculed him as Sporus, who could feel neither satire nor sense, and as Lord



Fanny. Yet Hervey could appreciate satire and sense ; could write satire and sense. He was a man of very rare capacity. He had already distinguished himself as a debater in the House of Commons, and was afterwards to distinguish himself as a debater in the House of Lords. He wrote pretty verses and clever pamphlets, and he has left to the world a collection of "Memoirs of the Reign of George the Second" which will always be read for its vivacity, its pungency, its bitterness, and its keen penetrating good sense. Hervey succeeded in obtaining the hand of one of the most beautiful women of the day, the charming Mary Lepell, whose name has been celebrated in more than one poetical panegyric by Pope, and he captivated the heart of one of the royal princesses.

The historical reader must strike a sort of balance for himself in getting at an estimate of Hervey's character. No man has been more bitterly denounced by his enemies or more warmly praised by his friends. Affectation, insincerity, prodigality, selfishness, servility to the great, contempt for the humble, are among the qualities his opponents ascribe to him. According to his friends, his cynicism was a mere affectation to hide a sensitive and generous nature ; his bitterness arose from his disappointment at finding so few men or women who came up to a really high standard of nobleness ; his homage to the great was but the half-disguised mockery of a scornful philosopher. Probably the picture drawn by the friends is on the whole more near to life than that painted by the enemies. The world owes him some thanks for a really interesting book, the very boldness and bitterness of which enhance to a certain extent its historical value. At this time Hervey was but little over thirty years of age. He was the son of the first Earl of Bristol by a second marriage, had been educated at Westminster School and at Clare Hall, Cambridge ; had gone early through the usual round of Continental travels, and became a friend of George the First's grandson, now Prince of Wales, at Hanover. This friendship not merely did not endure, but soon turned into hate. Hervey was an admirer of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, and was admired by her ; but her own assurances, which may be trusted, declared

that there had been nothing warmer than friendship between them. Lady Mary afterwards maintained that the relationship between Hervey and her established the possibility of "a long and steady friendship subsisting between two persons of different sexes without the least admixture of love." Hervey was in his day a somewhat free and liberal lover of women, and it is not surprising that the world should have regarded his acquaintanceship with Lady Mary as something warmer than mere friendship. We shall have occasion to refer to Hervey's memoirs of the reign of George the Second more than once hereafter, and may perhaps now cite a few words which Hervey himself says in vindication of their sincerity and their historical accuracy:—

"No one who did not live in these times will, I dare say, believe but some of those I describe in these papers must have had some hard features and deformities exaggerated and heightened by the malice and ill-nature of the painter who drew them. Others, perhaps, will say that at least no painter is obliged to draw every wart or wen or hump-back in its full proportions, and that I might have softened these blemishes where I found them. But I am determined to report everything just as it is, or at least just as it appears to me; and those who have a curiosity to see courts and courtiers dissected, must bear with the dirt they find in laying open such minds with as little nicety and as much patience as, in a dissection of their bodies, if they wanted to see that operation, they must submit to the disgust."

Hervey fought with spirit and effect on the side of Walpole, although Lady Hervey strongly disliked the Minister and was disliked by him. Walpole had at one time, it was said, made unsuccessful love to the beautiful and witty Molly Lepell, and he did not forgive her because of her scornful rejection of his ponderous attempts at gallantry. Hervey nevertheless took Walpole's side, and proved to be an ally of some importance. A great struggle was approaching, in which the whole strength of Walpole's hold on the Sovereign and the country was to be tested by the severest strain.

Walpole was, as we have said more than once, the first of the great financier statesmen of England. He was the first statesman who properly appreciated the virtue and the value

of mere economy in the disposal of a nation's revenues. He was the first to devise anything like a solid and symmetrical plan for the fair adjustment of taxation. Sometimes he had recourse to rather poor and commonplace artifices, as in the case of his proposal to meet a certain financial strain by borrowing half a million from the Sinking Fund. This proposal he carried by a large majority, in spite of the most vehement and even furious opposition on the part of the Patriots. It must be owned that the Patriots were right enough in the principle of their objection to this encroachment on the Sinking Fund, although their predictions as to the ruin it must bring upon the country were preposterous. Borrowing from a sinking fund is always rather a shabby dodge; but it is a trick familiar to all statesmen in difficulties, and Walpole did no worse than many statesmen of later days, who, with the full advantages of a sound and well-developed financial system, have shown that they were not able to do any better.

The Patriots seem to have made up their minds to earn their title. They fought the "Court," or Ministerial, party on a variety of issues. They supported motions for the reduction of the numbers of the army, and they declaimed against the whole principle of a standing army with patriotic passion, which sometimes appeared for the time quite genuine. They brought illustrations of all kinds, applicable and inapplicable, from Greek and Roman, from French and Spanish history, even from Eastern history, to show that a standing army was invariably the instrument of despotism and the forerunner of doom to the liberties of a people. The financial policy of the Government gave them frequent opportunities for using the sword of the partisan behind the fluttering cloak of the patriot. On both sides of the House there was considerable confusion of ideas on the subject of political economy and the incidence of taxation. Walpole was ahead of his own party as well as of his opponents on such subjects; his followers were little more enlightened than his antagonists.

In 1732 there was presented to the House of Commons an interesting report from the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations on "the state of his Majesty's colonies and



plantations in America, with respect to any laws made, manufactures set up, and trade carried on there, which may affect the trade, navigation, and manufactures of this kingdom." From this report we learn that at the time there were three different systems of government prevailing in the American colonies. Some provinces were immediately under the administration of the Crown: these were Nova Scotia, New Hampshire, the Jerseys, New York, Virginia, the two Carolinas, Bermuda, Bahama Islands, Jamaica, Barbadoes, and the Leeward Islands. Others were vested in proprietors—Pennsylvania, for example, and Maryland—and the Bahamas and the two Carolinas had not long before been in the same condition. There were three Charter Governments, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut, in which the power was divided between the Crown and the population, where the people chose their representative assemblies, and the Governor was dependent upon the Assembly for his annual support, "which," as the report observed ingenuously, "has so frequently laid the Governor of such a province under temptations of giving up the prerogative of the Crown and the interest of Great Britain." The report contains a very full account of the state of manufactures in all the provinces. New York, for example, had no manufactures "that deserved mentioning"; the trade there "consisted chiefly in furs, whalebone, oil, pitch, tar, and provisions." In Massachusetts "the inhabitants worked up their wool and flax, and made an ordinary coarse cloth for their own use, but did not export any." In Pennsylvania the "chief trade lay in the exportation of provisions and lumber," and there were "no manufactures established, their clothing and utensils for their houses being all imported from Great Britain." For the object of the whole report was not to discover how far the energy of the colonists was developing the resources of the colonies in order that the Government and the people of England might be gratified with a knowledge of the progress made, and give their best encouragement to further progress; the enquiry was set on foot in order to find out whether the colonists were presuming to manufacture for themselves any goods which they ought by right to buy

from English makers, and to recommend steps by which such audacious enterprises might be rebuked and prevented. This is the avowed object of the report, and we find governor after governor assuring the Commissioners earnestly and plaintively that the population of his province really manufacture nothing, or at all events nothing that could possibly interfere with the sacred privileges of the English monopolists. The report significantly recommends the House of Commons to take into consideration the question "whether it might not be expedient to give these colonies proper encouragements for turning their industry to such manufactures and products as might be of service to Great Britain, and more particularly to the production of all kinds of naval stores." The proper encouragement given to this sort of productiveness would imply, of course, proper discouragement given to anything else. The colonies were to exist merely for the convenience and benefit of the so-called mother country, a phrase surely of sardonic impressiveness. Such, however, was the common feeling of that day in England. It was so with regard to India; it was so with regard to Ireland. The story of the pelican was reversed. The pelican did not in this case feed her young with her blood; the young were expected to give their blood to feed the pelican.

The real strain was to come when Walpole should introduce his famous and long-expected scheme for a reform in the customs and excise laws. Walpole's scheme was inspired by two central ideas. One of these was to diminish the amount of taxation imposed on the land of the country, and make up the deficiency by indirect taxation; the other was to reduce the customs duties by substituting as far as possible an excise duty. Walpole would have desired something like free trade as regarded the introduction of food and the raw materials of manufacture. Let these be got into the country as easily and freely as possible, was his principle, and then let us see afterwards how we can adjust the excise duties so as to produce the largest amount of revenue with the smallest injury to the interest of the consumer, and with the minimum of waste. His design was that the necessaries of life and the raw materials of manu-

facture should remain as nearly as possible untaxed, and that the revenue of the country should be collected from land and from luxuries. We do not mean to say that the plans which Walpole presented to the country were faithful in all their details to these central ideas. One scheme at least which he laid before Parliament was positively at variance with the main principles he had long been trying to establish. But in considering the whole controversy between him and his opponents the reader may take it for granted that such were the principles by which his financial policy was inspired. He had been moving quietly in this direction for some time. He had removed the import duties from tea, coffee, and chocolate, and made them subject to inland or excise duties. In 1732 he revived the salt tax. The Bill, which was introduced on February 9, 1732, to accomplish this object, met with a strong opposition in both Houses of Parliament. Walpole's speech in introducing the motion for the revival of the tax contained a very clear statement of his financial creed: "Where every man contributes a small share, a great sum may be raised for the public service without any man's being sensible of what he pays; whereas a small sum raised upon a few lies heavy upon each particular man, and is the more grievous in that it is unjust; for where the benefit is mutual the expense ought to be in common." The general principle is unassailable; but Walpole seems to us to have been quite wrong in his application of it to such an impost as the salt tax. "Of all the taxes I ever could think of," he argued, "there is not one more general, nor one less felt, than that of the duty upon salt." He described it as a "tax that every man in the nation contributes to according to his circumstances and condition in life." This is exactly what every man does not do. The family of the rich man does not by any means consume more salt than the family of the poor man in proportion to their respective incomes. Pulteney knocked Walpole's argument all to pieces in a speech of remarkable force and ingenuity even for him. There was something honestly pathetic in his appeal on behalf of the poor man, whom the duty on salt would touch most nearly. The tax, he said, would be at least one shilling a head for every man



or woman able to work ; to a man with a family it would average four shillings and sixpence a year. Such a yearly sum “may be looked upon as a trifle by a gentleman of a large estate and easy circumstances, but a poor man feels sometimes severely the want of a shilling ; many a poor man has for want of a shilling been obliged to pawn the only whole coat he had to his back, and has never been able to redeem it again. Even a farthing to a poor man is a considerable sum ; what shifts do the frugal among them make to save even a farthing !”

Had all Pulteney’s speech been animated by this spirit he would have made out an unanswerable case. The objection to a salt tax in England then was not so great as in India at a later period ; but the principle of the tax was undoubtedly bad, while the general principle of Walpole’s finance was undoubtedly good. The question, however, was not argued out by Pulteney or any other speaker on his side upon such a ground as the hardship to the poor man. The tyranny of an excise system, of any excise system, its unconstitutional, despotic, and inquisitorial nature—this was the chief ground of attack. Sir William Wyndham sounded the alarm which was soon to be followed by a tremendous echo. He declared the proposed tax “not only destructive to the trade, but inconsistent with the liberties of this nation.” The very number of the officers who would have to be appointed to collect this one tax, who would be named by the Crown and scattered all over the country, would have immense influence on the elections ; and this fact alone would give a power into the hands of the Crown greater than was consistent with the liberties of the people, and “of the most dangerous consequence to our happy constitution.” The Bill passed the House of Commons, and was read a first time in the House of Lords on March 22. The second reading was moved on March 27, and a long debate took place. Not the least interesting fact concerning this debate was that the leading part in opposition to the Bill was taken by Lord Carteret, who had returned from his Irish Government, and was beginning to show himself a pertinacious and a formidable enemy of Walpole and his Administration. Carteret out-

shone even Pulteney and Wyndham in wholesale and extravagant denunciation of the measure. He likened it to the domestic policy of Cardinal Richelieu, by which the estates of the nobility and gentry were virtually confiscated to the Crown, and the liberties of the people were lost. It would place it in the power of a wicked Administration to reduce the English people to the same condition as the people in Turkey; "their only resource will be in mobs and tumults, and the prevailing party will administer justice by general massacres and proscriptions." All this may now seem sheer absurdity; but for the purposes of Carteret and Pulteney it was by no means absurd. The salt tax was carried through the House of Lords; but the public out of doors were taught to believe that the Minister's financial policy was merely a series of artifices for the destruction of popular rights, and for robbing England of her political liberty.

Walpole had long had in his mind a measure of a different nature, a measure to readjust the duties on tobacco and wine. It was known that he was preparing some Bill on the subject, and the excitement which was beginning to show itself at the time of the salt tax debates was turned to account by the Opposition to forestall the popular reception of the expected measure. The cry was got up that the Administration were planning a scheme for a general excise, and the bare idea of a general excise was then odious and terrible to the public. Whatever Walpole's final purposes may have been, there was nothing to alarm any one in the scheme which he was presently to introduce. Nobody now would think of impugning the soundness of the economical principles on which his moderate, limited, and tentative scheme of fiscal reform was founded.

The coming event threw its shadow before it, and the shadow became marvellously distorted. Pulteney, speaking on February 23, 1733, with regard to the Sinking Fund proposal, talked of the expected excise scheme in language of such exaggeration that it is impossible to believe the orator could have felt anything like the alarm and horror he expressed. There is "a very terrible affair impending,"

Pulteney said, "a monstrous project—yea, more monstrous than has ever yet been represented. It is such a project as has struck terror into the minds of most gentlemen within this House, and into the minds of all men without doors who have any regard to the happiness or to the constitution of their country. I mean that monster the excise; that plan of arbitrary power which is expected to be laid before this House in the present session of Parliament." Sir John Barnard, one of the members for the City of London, a man of great respectability, capacity, and influence, ventured to predict that Walpole's scheme would "turn out to be his eternal shame and dishonour, and that the more the project is examined and the consequences thereof considered, the more the projector will be hated and despised."

Of all this strong language Walpole took little account. He meant to propose his scheme, he said, when the proper time should come, and he did not doubt but that honourable members would find it something very different from the vague and monstrous project of which they had been told. In any case he meant to propose it. Accordingly, on Wednesday, March 7, 1733, Walpole moved that the House should on that day week resolve itself into a committee "to consider of the most proper methods for the better security and improvement of the duties and revenues already charged upon and payable from tobacco and wines." On the day appointed, Wednesday, March 14, the House went into committee accordingly, and Walpole expounded his scheme. It was simply a plan to deal with the duties on wines and tobacco, and Walpole protested that his views and purposes were confined altogether to these two branches of the revenue, and that such a thing as a scheme for a general excise had never entered into his head, "nor, for what I know, into the head of any man I am acquainted with." There was in the mind of the English people then a vague horror of all excise laws and excise officers, and the whole opposition to Walpole's scheme in and out of the House of Commons was maintained by an appeal to that common feeling. Walpole's resolutions with regard to the tobacco trade were taken first and separately. It will soon



be seen that the resolutions concerning the duties on wine were destined never to be discussed at all. What Walpole proposed to do in regard to tobacco was to make the customs duty very small and to increase the excise duty; to establish bonded warehouses for the storing of the tobacco imported into this country, and meant to be exported again or sold here for home consumption; thus to encourage and facilitate the importation; to get rid of many of the dishonest practices which injured the fair dealer and defrauded the revenue; to put a stop to smuggling; to benefit at once the grower, the manufacturer, the consumer, and the revenue. We need not relate at great length and in minute detail the history of these resolutions and of the debates on them in the House of Commons. But it may be pointed out that wild and absurd as were the outcries of the Patriots, there yet was good reason for their apprehension of a growing scheme to substitute excise for land tax, or poll tax, or customs. Walpole was, as we know, a firm believer in the advantages of indirect taxation, and of the introduction, as freely as possible, of all raw materials for manufacture and all articles useful for the food of a nation. He was a free-trader before his time, and he saw that in certain cases there was immense advantage to the consumer and to the revenue in allowing articles to be imported under as light a duty as possible, and then putting an excise duty on their distribution here. Walpole was perfectly right in all this, but his enemies were none the less justified in proclaiming that the proposals he was introducing could not end in a mere readjustment of the tobacco and wine duties.

Walpole's first resolution was carried by 266 votes against 205. The Government had won a victory, but it was such a victory as Walpole did not care to win. He had been used of late to bear down all before him, and he saw with eyes of clear foreboding the ominous significance of his present majority. He knew well that the Opposition had got the most telling cry they could possibly have sought or found against him. He knew that popular tumult would grow from day to day. He knew that his enemies were unscrupulous, and that they were banded together

against him on many grounds, and with many different purposes. Every section of the nation which had any hostile feeling to the House of Hanover, to the existing Administration, or to the Prime Minister himself, made common cause against, not his Excise Bill, but him. The tobacco resolutions were passed, and a Bill to put them into execution was ordered to be prepared. On April 4 the Bill was introduced to the House of Commons, and a motion was made that it be read a first time. Much, however, had happened out of doors since the day when Walpole introduced his resolutions. Even at that time there was a great excitement abroad, which brought crowds of more or less tumultuous persons round the entrances of the House of Commons. The troops had to be kept in readiness for any emergency that might arise. The least thing feared was that they might have to be employed to keep the access to the House clear for its members. By the time the first division had taken place the tide of popular passion had swollen still higher. As Walpole was quitting the House a furious rush was made at him, and but that some of his colleagues surrounded, protected, and bore him off, he would have been in serious personal danger. But the interval between that event and the introduction of the Bill had been turned to very practical account by those who were agitating against him, and the country was now in a flame of excitement. "The Craftsman" and the pamphleteers had done their work well. The most extravagant consequences were described as certain to follow from the adoption of Walpole's excise scheme. A Minister once allowed to impose his excise duty upon wine and tobacco, and—thus shrieked the mouths of a hundred pamphleteers and verse-mongers—he will go on imposing excise on every article of food, and dress, and household use. Nothing will be able to resist the inquisitorial exciseman. It was positively asserted in ballad and in pamphlet that before long the exciseman would everywhere practise on the daughters of England the atrociously insulting test which was attempted on Wat Tyler's daughter, and which brought about Wat Tyler's insurrection. The memories of Wat Tyler and of Jack

Straw were invoked to arouse popular panic and fury. Strange as it may now seem, these appeals were successful in their object, they did create a popular panic, and stir up popular passion and fury to the uttermost height. Not even Walpole attempted any longer to argue down the monstrous misrepresentations of his policy. The fury against him and his excise scheme grew hotter every day, and at one time it was actually thought that his life was in danger. Tumultuous crowds of people gathered in and around all the approaches to the House of Commons. Several members of the House who were known to be in favour of the Ministerial scheme complained that they had been menaced, insulted, and even assaulted; and the House had for the security of its own debates, and the personal safety of its own members, to pass resolutions declaring that this riotous behaviour was destructive of the freedom and constitution of Parliament, and a high crime and misdemeanour. In the House itself certain tactics, with which Parliament has been very familiar at a later period, were tried with some effect. Various motions for adjournment and other such delay to the progress of the Bill were made and pressed to a division. It was becoming evident to every one that the measure was doomed, and the hearts of the leaders of Opposition rose with each hour that passed, while the spirits of the Ministerialists fell.

Walpole never lost his head, although he well knew that a certain and a damaging failure was now awaiting him. He still proclaimed that his measure could be hurtful to none but smugglers and unfair traders, that it would be of great benefit to the revenue and the nation, that it would tend "to make London a free port, and by consequence the market of the world." He spoke with scorn of the riotous crowds whom some had declared to be merely respectful petitioners. "Gentlemen may give them what name they think fit; it may be said that they came hither as humble suppliants, but I know whom the law calls sturdy beggars." The Common Council of London, spirited on by a Jacobite Lord Mayor, petitioned against the excise scheme, and its example was followed by various



municipalities in the kingdom. Walpole acted at last according to the principle which always governed him at such a crisis. He had the courage to abandon the ground which he had taken up, and which he would have been well entitled to maintain if argument could prevail over misrepresentation and passion. With that cool contempt for the extravagance and the ignorance of the sentiment which thwarted him, he abandoned his scheme and let the mob have its way. On Wednesday, April 11, 1733, it was made known that the Government did not intend to go any further with the Bill. Exultation all over the island was unbounded. Church bells rang, windows were illumined, bonfires blazed, multitudes shouted everywhere. If England had gained some splendid victory over a combination of foreign enemies, there could not have been a greater display of frantic national enthusiasm than that which broke out when it was found that hostile clamour had prevailed against the Minister, and that his excise scheme was abandoned.

Frederick the Great has enriched the curiosities of history with an account which he gives of the abandonment of the Bill. According to him, George the Second had devised the measure as a means of making himself absolute Sovereign of England. The Excise Bill was intended to put him in possession of a revenue fixed and assured, a revenue large enough to allow him to increase his military power to any strength he pleased. It only needed a word of command and a chief for revolution to break out. Walpole escaped from Parliament covered with an old cloak, and shouting with all his might, "Liberty, liberty! no excise!" Thus disguised, he managed to get to the King in St. James's Palace. He found the King preparing for the worst, arming himself at all points, having put on the hat he wore at Malplaquet, and trying the temper of the sword he carried at Oudenarde. George desired to put himself at once at the head of his guards, and try conclusions with his enemies. Walpole had all the trouble in the world to moderate his Sovereign's impetuosity, and at length represented to him, "with the generous hardihood of an Englishman attached to his master," that it was only

a choice between abandoning the Excise Bill and losing the Crown. Whereupon George at last gave way; the Bill was abandoned, and the Crown preserved.

This scene is, of course, a piece of the purest romance. But it is certain that the passions of the people were so thoroughly aroused, that a man less cool and in the true sense courageous than Walpole might have provoked a popular outbreak, and no one can say whether the crown of the Brunswicks might not have gone down in a popular outbreak just then. Time and education have long since vindicated Walpole's financial principles; but the passion, the ignorance, and the partisanship of his own day were too strong, and prevailed against him.

## CHAPTER XXI

### BOLINGBROKE ROUTED AGAIN

WHILE "the King's friends" and the Patriots, otherwise the court party and the country party, were speech-making and pamphleteering, one of the greatest English pamphleteers, who was also one of the masters of English fiction, passed quietly out of existence. On April 24, 1731, Daniel Defoe died. It does not belong to the business of this history to narrate the life, or describe the works, of Defoe. The book on which his fame will chiefly rest was published just twelve years before his death. "Robinson Crusoe" first thrilled the world in 1719. "Robinson Crusoe" has a place in literature as unassailable as "Gulliver's Travels" or as "Don Quixote." Rousseau in his "Emile" declares that "Robinson Crusoe" should for a long time be his pupil's sole library, and that it would ever after through life be to him one of his dearest intellectual companions. At the present time, it is said, English schoolboys do not read "Robinson Crusoe." There are laws of literary reaction in the tastes of schoolboys as of older people; there were days when the English public did not read Shakespeare. But it was certain that Shakespeare would come

up again, and it is certain that Robinson Crusoe will come up again. Defoe had been a fierce fighter in the political literature of his time, and that was a trying time for the political gladiator. He, had, according to his own declaration, been thirteen times rich and thirteen times poor. He had always written according to his convictions, and he had a spirit that no enemy could cow, and that no persecution could break. He had had the most wonderful ups and downs of fortune. He had been patronised by sovereigns and persecuted by statesmen. He had been fined; he had been pensioned; he had been sent on political missions by one Minister, and he had been clapped into Newgate by another. He had been applauded in the streets and he had been hooted in the pillory. Had he not written "Robinson Crusoe," he would still have held a high place in English literature, because of the other romances that came from his teeming brain, and because of the political tracts that made so deep and lasting an impression even in that age of famous political tracts. But "Robinson Crusoe" is to his other works like Aaron's serpent, or the "one master-passion in the breast," which the poet has compared with it—it "swallows all the rest." "While all ages and descriptions of people," says Charles Lamb, "hang delighted over the adventures of Robinson Crusoe, and will continue to do so, we trust, while the world lasts, how few comparatively will bear to be told that there exist other fictitious narratives by the same writer—four of them at least of no inferior interest, except what results from a less felicitous choice of situation. 'Roxana,' 'Singleton,' 'Moll Flanders,' 'Colonel Jack,' are all genuine offsprings of the same father. They bear the veritable impress of Defoe. Even an unpractised midwife would swear to the nose, lip, forehead, and eye of every one of them. They are, in their way, as full of incident, and some of them every bit as romantic: only they want the uninhabited island, and the charm (that has bewitched the world) of the striking solitary situation." Defoe died in poverty and solitude—"alone, with his glory." It is perhaps not uninteresting to note that in the same month of the same year, 1731, on April 8, "Mrs. Elizabeth Cromwell, daughter of Richard



Cromwell, the Protector, and grand-daughter of Oliver Cromwell, died at her house in Bedford Row, in the eighty-second year of her age."

The death of Gay followed not long after that of Defoe. The versatile author of "The Beggar's Opera" had been sinking for some years into a condition of almost unrelieved despondency. He had had some disappointments, and he was sensitive, and took them too much to heart. He had had brilliant successes, and he had devoted friends, but a slight failure was more to him than a great success, and what he regarded as the falling away of one friend was for the time of more account to him than the steady and faithful friendship of many men and women. Shortly before his death he wrote: "I desire, my dear Mr. Pope, whom I love as my own soul, if you survive me, as you certainly will, if a stone should mark the place of my grave, see these words put upon it :

Life is a jest and all things show it :  
I thought so once, but now I know it."

Gay died in the house of his friends, the Duke and Duchess of Queensberry, on December 4, 1732. He was buried near the tomb of Chaucer in Westminster Abbey, and a monument was set up to his memory, bearing on it Pope's famous epitaph which contains the line, "In wit a man, simplicity a child." Gay is but little known to the present generation. Young people or old people do not read his fables any more—those fables which Rousseau thought worthy of special discussion in his great treatise on Education. The gallant Captain Macheath swaggers and sings across the operatic stage no longer, nor are tears shed now for pretty Polly Peachum's troubles. Yet every day some one quotes from Gay and does not know what he is quoting from.

Walpole was not magnanimous towards enemies who had still the power to do him harm. When the enemy could hurt him no longer, Walpole felt anger no longer ; but it was not his humour to spare any man who stood in his way and resisted him. If he was not magnanimous, at least he did not affect magnanimity. He did not pretend to regard with contempt or indifference men whom in his heart he believed to be formidable opponents. It was a

tribute to the capacity of a public man to be disliked by Walpole; a still higher tribute to be dreaded by him. One of the men whom the great Minister was now beginning to hold in serious dislike and dread was Philip Dormer Stanhope, Earl of Chesterfield. Born in 1694, Chesterfield was still what would be called in political life a young man; He was not quite forty. He had led a varied and somewhat eccentric career. His father, a morose man, had a coldness for him; young Stanhope, according to his own account, was an absolute pedant at the university. "When I talked my best I quoted Horace; when I aimed at being facetious I quoted Martial; and when I had a mind to be a fine gentleman I talked Ovid. I was convinced that none but the ancients had common sense, that the classics contained everything that was either necessary, useful, or ornamental to me; . . . and I was not even without thoughts of wearing the *toga virilis* of the Romans instead of the vulgar and illiberal dress of the moderns." Later he had been a devotee of fashion and the gambling table; was a man of fashion and a gambler still. He had travelled; had seen and studied life in many countries and cities and courts; had seen and studied many phases of life. He professed to be dissipated and even licentious; but he had an ambitious and a daring spirit. He well knew his own great gifts, and he knew also and frankly recognised the defects of character and temperament which were likely to neutralise their influence. If he entered the House of Commons before the legal age, if for long he preferred pleasure to politics, he was determined to make a mark in the political world. We shall see much of Chesterfield in the course of this history; we shall see how utterly unjust and absurd is the common censure which sets him down as a literary and political fribble; we shall see that his speeches were so good that Horace Walpole declares that the finest speech he ever listened to was one of Chesterfield's; we shall see how bold he could be, and what an enlightened judgment he could bring to bear on the most difficult political questions; we shall see how near he went to genuine political greatness.

It is not easy to form a secure opinion as to the real

character of Chesterfield. If one is to believe the accounts of some of the contemporaries who came closest to him and ought to have known him best, Chesterfield had scarcely one great or good quality of heart. His intellect no one disputed, but no one seems to have believed that he had any savour of truth or honour or virtue. Hervey, who was fond of beating out fancies fine, is at much pains to compare and contrast Chesterfield with Scarborough and Carteret. Thus, while Lord Scarborough was always searching after truth, loving it and adhering to it, Chesterfield and Carteret were both of them most abominably given to fable, and both of them often unnecessarily and consequently indiscreetly so; "for whoever would lie usefully should lie seldom." Lord Scarborough had understanding, with judgment and without wit; Lord Chesterfield a speculative head, with wit and without judgment. Lord Scarborough had honour and principle, while Chesterfield and Carteret treated all principles of honesty and integrity with such open contempt that they seemed to think the appearance of these qualities would be of as little use to them as the reality. In short, Lord Scarborough was an honest, prudent man, capable of being a good friend, while Lord Chesterfield and Carteret were dishonest, imprudent creatures, whose principles practically told all their acquaintance, "If you do not behave to me like knaves, I shall either distrust you as hypocrites or laugh at you as fools."

We have said already in this history that a reader who wishes to form an estimate of the character of Lord Hervey will have to strike a sort of balance for himself between the extravagant censure flung at him by his enemies and the extravagant praise blown to him by his friends. But we find no such occasion or opportunity for striking a balance in the case of Lord Chesterfield. All the testimony goes the one way. What do we hear of him? That he was dwarfish; that he was hideously ugly; that he was all but deformed; that he was utterly unprincipled, vain, false, treacherous, and cruel; that he had not the slightest faith in the honour of men or the virtue of women; that he was silly enough to believe himself, with all his personal defects, actually irresistible to the most gifted and beautiful woman,



and that he was mendacious enough to proclaim himself the successful lover of women who would not have given ear to his love-making for one moment. Yet we cannot believe that Chesterfield was by any means the monster of ugliness and selfish levity whom his enemies, and some who called themselves his friends, have painted for posterity. He was, says Hervey, short, disproportioned, thick, and clumsily made; had a broad, rough-featured, ugly face, with black teeth, and a head big enough for a Polyphemus. "One Ben Ashurst, who said few good things, though admired for many, told Lord Chesterfield once that he was like a stunted giant, which was a humorous idea and really apposite." His portraits do not by any means bear out the common descriptions of his personal appearance. Doubtless court painters then as now flattered or idealised, but one can scarcely believe that any painter coolly converted a hideous face into a rather handsome one and went wholly unreprieved by the public opinion of his time. The truth probably is that Chesterfield's bitter, sarcastic, and unsparing tongue made him enemies who came in the end to see nothing but deformity in his person and perfidy in his heart. It is easy to say epigrammatically of such a man that "his propensity to ridicule, in which he indulged himself with infinite humour and no distinction, and with inexhaustible spirits and no discretion, made him sought and feared, liked and not loved, by most of his acquaintance"; it is easy to say that "no sex, no relation, no rank, no power, no profession, no friendship, no obligation, was a shield from those pointed, glittering weapons that seemed only to shine to a stander-by, but cut deep in those they touched." But to say this is not to say all, or to paint a fair picture. It is evident that Chesterfield delighted in passing himself off on serious and heavy people as a mere trifler, paradox-maker, and cynic. He invited them not to take him seriously, and they did take him seriously, but the wrong way. They believed that he was serious when he professed to have no faith in anything; when he declared that he only lived for pleasure and did not care by what means he got it; that politics were to him ridiculous, and ambition was the folly of a vulgar mind. We now know that he had an

almost boundless political ambition, and we know, too, that when put under the responsibilities that make or mar statesmen he showed himself equal to a great task, and proved that he knew how to govern a nation which no English statesman before his time or since was able to rule from Dublin Castle. If the policy of Chesterfield had been adopted with regard to Ireland, these countries would have been saved more than a century of trouble. We cannot believe the statesman to have been only superficial and worthless who anticipated in his Irish policy the convictions of Burke and the ideas of Fox.

The time, however, of Chesterfield's Irish administration is yet to come. At present he is still only a rising man; but every one admits his eloquence and his capacity. It was he who moved in the House of Lords the "Address of condolence, congratulation, and thanks" for the speech from the throne on the accession of George the Second. Since then he had served the King in diplomacy. He had been Minister to the Hague; and the Hague then was a very different place in the diplomatist's sense from what it is now or is ever likely to be again. He had been employed on special missions and had been concerned in the making of important treaties. He was rewarded for his services with the Garter, and was made Lord Steward of the Household. He had distinguished himself highly as an orator in the House of Lords; had taken a place among the very foremost parliamentary orators of the day. But he chafed against Walpole's dictatorship, and soon began to show that he was determined not to endure too much of it. He secretly did all he could to mar Walpole's excise scheme; he encouraged his three brothers to oppose the Bill in the House of Commons. He said witty and sarcastic things about the measure, which, of course, were duly reported to Walpole's ears. Perhaps Chesterfield thought he stood too high to be in danger from Walpole's hand. If he did think so, he soon found out his mistake. Walpole's hand struck him down in the most unsparing and humiliating way. Public affront was added to political deprivation. Lord Chesterfield was actually going up the great stairs of St. James's Palace on the day but one after the Excise Bill had

been withdrawn, when he was stopped by an official and bidden to go home and bring back the white staff which was the emblem of his office, of all the chief offices of the Household, and surrender it. Chesterfield took the demand thus ungraciously made with his usual composure and politeness. He wrote a letter to the King, which the King showed to Walpole, but did not think fit to answer. The letter, Walpole afterwards told Lord Hervey, was "extremely laboured, but not well done." Chesterfield immediately passed into opposition and became one of the bitterest and most formidable enemies Walpole had to encounter. Walpole's friends always justified his treatment of Chesterfield by asserting that Chesterfield was one of a party who were caballing against the Minister at the time of the excise scheme, and while Chesterfield was a member of the Government. Chesterfield, it was declared, used actually to attend certain private meetings and councils of Walpole's enemies to concert measures against him. There is nothing incredible or even unlikely in this; but even if it were utterly untrue we may assume that sooner or later Walpole would have got rid of Chesterfield. Walpole's besetting weakness was that he could not endure any really capable colleague. The moment a man showed any capacity for governing, Walpole would appear to have made up his mind that that man and he were not to govern together.

Walpole made a clean sweep of the men in office whom he believed to have acted against him. He even went so far as to deprive of their commissions in the army two peers holding no manner of office in the Administration, but whom he believed to have acted against him. To strengthen himself in the House of Lords he conferred a peerage on his Attorney-General and on his Solicitor-General. Philip Yorke, the Attorney-General, became Lord Hardwicke and Chief Justice of the King's Bench; Charles Talbot was made Lord Chancellor under the title of Lord Talbot. Both were men of great ability. Hardwicke stood higher in the rank at the bar than Talbot, and in the ordinary course of things he ought to have had the position of Lord Chancellor. But Talbot was only great as a Chancery lawyer, and knew little or nothing of common



law, and it would have been out of the question to make him Lord Chief Justice. So Walpole devised a characteristic scheme of compromise. Hardwicke was induced to accept the office of Lord Chief Justice on the salary being raised from £3000 to £4000, and with the further condition that an additional thousand a year was to be paid to him out of the Lord Chancellor's salary. This curious transaction Walpole managed through the Queen, and the Queen managed to get the King to regard it as a clever device of his own invention. It is worth while to note that the only charge ever made against Hardwicke by his contemporaries was a charge of avarice; he was stingy even in his hospitality, his enemies said—a great offence in that day was to be parsimonious with one's guests; and malignant people called him Judge Gripus. For aught else, his public and private character was blameless. Hardwicke was the stronger man of the two; Talbot the more subtle and ingenious. Both were eloquent pleaders and skilled lawyers, each in his own department. Hervey says that "no one could make more of a good cause than Lord Hardwicke, and no one so much of a bad cause as Lord Talbot." Hardwicke lived to have a long career of honour and to win a secure place in English history. Lord Talbot became at once a commanding influence in the House of Lords. "Our new Lord Chancellor," the Earl of Strafford, England's nominal and ornamental representative in the negotiation for the Peace of Utrecht, writes to Swift, "at present has a great party in the House." But the new Lord Chancellor did not live long enough for his fame. He was destined to die within a few short years, and to leave the woolsack open for Lord Hardwicke.

The House of Commons has hardly ever been thrilled to interest and roused to passion by a more heated, envenomed, and, in the rhetorical sense, brilliant debate than that which took place on March 13, 1734. The subject of the debate was the motion of a country gentleman, Mr. William Bromley, member for Warwick, "that leave be given to bring in a Bill for repealing the Septennial Act, and for the more frequent meeting and calling of Parliaments." The circumstances under which this motion

was brought forward gave it a peculiar importance as a party movement. Before the debate began it was agreed, upon a formal motion to that effect, "that the Sergeant-at-arms attending the House should go with the mace into Westminster Hall, and into the Court of Requests, and places adjacent, and summon the members there to attend the service of the House."

The general elections were approaching; the Parliament then sitting had nearly run its course. The Patriots had been making every possible preparation for a decisive struggle against Walpole. They had been using every weapon which partisan hatred and political craft could supply or suggest. The fury roused up by the Excise Bill had not yet wholly subsided. Public opinion still throbbed and heaved like a sea the morning after a storm. The Patriots had been exerting their best efforts to make the country dissatisfied with Walpole's foreign policy. The changes were incessantly rung upon the alleged depredations which the Spaniards were committing on our mercantile marine. Long before the time for the general elections had come, the Patriot candidates were stumping the country. Their progress through each county was marked by the wildest riots. The riots sometimes called for the sternest military repression. On the other hand, the Patriots themselves were denounced and discredited by all the penmen, pamphleteers, and orators who supported the Government on their own account, or were hired by Walpole and Walpole's friends to support it. So effective were some of these attacks, so damaging was the incessant imputation that in the mouths of the Patriots patriotism meant nothing but a desire for place and pay, that Pulteney and his comrades found it advisable to try to shake off the name which had been put on them, and which they had at one time willingly adopted. They began to call themselves "the representatives of the country interest."

The final struggle of the session was to take place on the motion for the repeal of the Septennial Act. We have already given an account of the passing of that Act in 1716, and of the reasons which in our opinion justified

its passing. It cannot be questioned that there is much to be said in favour of the principle of short Parliaments, but in Walpole's time the one great object of true statesmanship was to strengthen the power of the House of Commons; to enable it to stand up against the Crown and the House of Lords. It would be all but impossible for the House of Commons to maintain this position if it were doomed to frequent and inevitable dissolutions. Frequent dissolution of Parliament means frequently recurring cost, struggle, anxiety, wear and tear, to the members; and, of course, it meant all this in much higher measure during the reign of George the Second than it could mean in the reign of Victoria. Walpole had devoted himself to the task of strengthening the representative assembly, and he was, therefore, well justified in resisting the motion which Mr. Bromley had brought forward for the repeal of the Septennial Act. Our interest now, however, is not so much with the political aspect of the debate as with its personal character. One illustration of the corruption which existed at the time may be mentioned in passing. It was used as an argument against long Parliaments, but assuredly at that day it might have been told of short Parliaments as well. Mr. Watkin Williams Wynn mentioned the fact that a former member of the House of Commons, afterwards one of the judges of the Common Pleas, "a gentleman who is now dead, and therefore I may name him," declared that he "had never been in the borough he represented in Parliament, nor had ever seen or spoke with any of his electors." Of course this worthy person, "afterwards one of the judges of the Common Pleas," had simply sent down his agent and bought the place. "I believe," added Mr. Wynn, "I could without much difficulty name some who are now in the same situation." No doubt he could.

Sir William Wyndham came on to speak. Wyndham was now, of course, the close ally of Bolingbroke. He hated Walpole. He made his whole speech one long denunciation of bribery and corruption, and gave it to be understood that in his firm conviction Walpole only wanted a long Parliament because it gave him better opportunities to bribe and to corrupt. He went on to draw a picture of



what might come to pass under an unscrupulous Minister sustained by a corrupted septennial Parliament. "Let us suppose," he said, "a gentleman at the head of the Administration whose only safety depends upon his corrupting the members of this House." Of course Sir William went on to declare that he only put this as a supposition, but it was certainly a thing which might come to pass, and was within the limits of possibility. If it did come to pass, could not such a Minister promise himself more success in a septennial than he could in a triennial Parliament? "It is an old maxim," Wyndham said, "that every man has his price." This allusion to the old maxim is worthy of notice in a debate on the conduct and character of Walpole. Evidently Wyndham did not fall into the mistake which posterity appears to have made and attribute to Walpole himself the famous words about man and his price. Suppose a case "which, though it has not yet happened, may possibly happen. Let us then suppose a man abandoned to all notions of virtue and honour, of no great family, and of but a mean fortune raised to be chief Minister of State by the concurrence of many whimsical events; afraid or unwilling to trust to any but creatures of his own making, and most of these equally abandoned to all notions of virtue or honour; ignorant of the true interest of his country, and consulting nothing but that of enriching and aggrandising himself and his favourites." Sir William pictured this supposititious personage as employing in foreign affairs none but men whose education made it impossible for them to have such qualifications as could be of any service to their country or give any credit to their negotiations. Under the rule of this Minister the orator described "the true interest of the nation neglected or misunderstood, her honour and credit lost, her trade insulted, her merchants plundered, and her sailors murdered, and all these things overlooked for fear only his Administration should be endangered. Suppose this man possessed of great wealth, the plunder of the nation, with a Parliament of his own choosing, most of their seats purchased, and their votes bought at the expense of the public treasure. In such a Parliament let

us suppose attempts made to enquire into his conduct or to relieve the nation from the distress he has brought upon it." Would it not be easy to suppose all such attempts discomfited by a corrupt majority of the creatures whom this Minister "retains in daily pay or engages in his particular interest by granting them those posts and places which never ought to be given to any but for the good of the public?" Sir William told of this Minister pluming himself upon "his scandalous victory" because he found he had got "a Parliament like a packed jury ready to acquit him at all adventures." Then, glowing with his subject, Sir William Wyndham ventured to suggest a case which he blandly declared had never yet happened in this nation, but which still might possibly happen. "With such a Minister and such a Parliament, let us suppose a prince upon the throne, either from want of true information, or for some other reason, ignorant and unacquainted with the inclinations and the interest of his people, weak, and hurried away by unbounded ambition and insatiable avarice. Could any greater curse befall a nation than such a prince on the throne, advised, and solely advised, by such a Minister, and that Minister supported by such a Parliament? The nature of mankind," the orator exclaimed, "cannot be altered by human laws; the existence of such a prince, of such a Minister, we cannot prevent by Act of Parliament; but the existence of such a Parliament, I think, we may; and, as such a Parliament is much more likely to exist, and may do more mischief while the Septennial Law remains in force than if it were repealed, therefore I am most heartily for the repeal of it."

This was a very pretty piece of invective. It was full of spirit, fire, and force. Nobody could have failed for a moment to know the original of the portrait Sir William Wyndham professed to be painting from imagination. It was not indeed a true portrait of Walpole; but it was a perfect photograph of what his enemies declared and even believed Walpole to be. Such was the picture which "The Craftsman" and the pamphleteers were painting every day as the likeness of the great Minister. But it was something

new, fresh, and bold to paint such a picture under the eyes of Walpole himself. The speech was hailed with the wildest enthusiasm and delight by all the Jacobites, Patriots, and representatives of the country interest; and there is even some good reason to believe that it gave a certain secret satisfaction to many of those who most steadily supported Walpole by their votes. But Walpole was not by any means the sort of man whom it is quite safe to visit with such an attack. The speech of Sir William Wyndham had doubtless been carefully prepared; and Walpole had but a short time, but a breathing-space, while two or three speeches were made, in which to get ready his reply. When he rose to address the House, it soon became evident that he had something to say; and that he was determined to give his adversary at least as good as he brought. Nothing could be more effective than Walpole's method of reply. It was not to Sir William Wyndham that he replied; at least it was not Sir William Wyndham whom he attacked. Walpole passed Wyndham by altogether. Wyndham he well knew to be but the mouthpiece of Bolingbroke, and it was at Bolingbroke that he struck. "I hope I may be allowed," he said, "to draw a picture in my turn; and I may likewise say that I do not mean to give a description of any particular person now in being. Indeed," Walpole added ingenuously, "the House being cleared, I am sure no person that hears me can come within the description of the person I am to suppose." This was a clever touch, and gave a new barb to the dart which Walpole was about to fling. The House was cleared; none but members were present; the description applied to none within hearing. Bolingbroke, of course, was not a member; he could not hear what Walpole was saying. Then Walpole went on to paint his picture. He supposed, "in this or in some other unfortunate country, an anti-minister" . . . "in a country where he really ought not to be, and where he could not have been but by an effect of too much goodness and mercy, yet endeavouring with all his might and with all his art to destroy the fountain from whence that mercy flowed." Walpole depicted this anti-minister as one "who



thinks himself a person of so great and extensive parts, and of so many eminent qualifications, that he looks upon himself as the only person in the kingdom capable of conducting the public affairs of the nation." Walpole supposed "this fine gentleman lucky enough to have gained over to his party some persons really of fine parts, of ancient families, and of great fortunes, and others of desperate views, arising from disappointed and malicious hearts." Walpole grouped with fine freehand drawing the band of conspirators thus formed under the leadership of this anti-minister. All the band were moved in their political behaviour by him, and by him solely. All they said, either in private or public, was "only a repetition of the words he had put into their mouths, and a spitting forth of the venom which he had infused into them." Walpole asked the House to suppose, nevertheless, that this anti-minister was not really liked by any even of those who blindly followed him, and was hated by the rest of mankind. He showed him contracting friendships and alliances with all foreign Ministers who were hostile to his own country, and endeavouring to get at the political secrets of English Administrations in order that he might betray them to foreign and hostile States. Further, he asked the House to suppose this man travelling from foreign court to court, making it his trade to betray the secrets of each court where he had most lately been, void of all faith and honour, delighting to be treacherous and traitorous to every master whom he had served and who had shown favour to him. "I could carry my suppositions a great deal farther; but, if we can suppose such a one as I have pictured, can there be imagined a greater disgrace to human nature than such a wretch as this?" The Ministers triumphed by a majority of 247 to 184. Walpole was the victor in more than the mere parliamentary majority. He had conquered in the fierce parliamentary duel.

There is a common impression that Walpole's speech hunted Bolingbroke out of the country; that it drove him into exile and obscurity again, as Cicero's invective drove Catiline into open rebellion. This, however, is not the

fact. A comparison of dates settles the question. The debate on the Septennial Bill took place in March 1734; Bolingbroke did not leave England until the early part of 1735. The actual date of his leaving England is not certain; but Pulteney, writing to Swift on April 29, 1735, adds, in a postscript: "Lord Bolingbroke is going to France with Lord Berkeley, but, I believe, will return again in a few months." No one could have known better than Pulteney that Bolingbroke was not likely to return to England in a few months. Still, although Bolingbroke did not make a hasty retreat, history is well warranted in saying that Walpole's powerful piece of invective closed the door once for all against Bolingbroke's career in English politics. Bolingbroke could not but perceive that Walpole's accusations against him sank deeply into the heart of the English people. He could not but see that some of those with whom he had been most closely allied of late years were impressed with the force of the invective; not, indeed, by its moral force, but by the thought of the influence it must have on the country. It may well have occurred to Pulteney, for example, as he listened to Walpole's denunciation, that the value of an associate was more than doubtful whom the public could recognise at a glance as the original of such a portrait. There had been disputes now and then already. Bolingbroke was too much disposed to regard himself as master of the situation; Pulteney was not unnaturally inclined to believe that he had a much better understanding of the existing political conditions; he complained that Wyndham submitted too much to Bolingbroke's dictation. The whole alliance was founded on unstable and unwholesome principles; it was sure to crumble and collapse sooner or later. There can be no question but that Walpole's invective precipitated the collapse. With consummate political art he had drawn his picture of Bolingbroke in such form as to make it especially odious just then to Englishmen. The mere supposition that an English statesman has packed cards with a foreign enemy is almost enough in itself at any time to destroy a great career; to turn a popular favourite into an object of national distrust or even national detesta-

tion. But in Bolingbroke's case it was no mere supposition. No one could doubt that he had often traded on the political interests of his own country. In truth there was but little of the Englishman about him. His gifts and his vices were alike of a foreign stamp. Walpole was, for good or ill, a genuine sturdy Englishman. His words, his actions, his policy, his schemes, his faults, his vices, were thorough English. It was as an Englishman, as an English citizen, more than as a statesman or an orator, that he bore down Bolingbroke in this memorable debate.

Bolingbroke must have felt himself borne down. He did not long carry on the struggle into which he had plunged with so much alacrity and energy, with such malice and such hope. Pulteney advised him to go back for a while to France, and in the early part of 1735 he took the advice and went. "My part is over," he wrote to Wyndham in words which have a certain pathetic dignity in them; "and he who remains on the stage after his part is over deserves to be hissed off." His departure, it might almost be called his second flight, to the Continent was probably hastened also by the knowledge that a pamphlet was about to be published by some of his enemies, containing a series of letters which had passed between him and James Stuart's secretary after Bolingbroke's dismissal from the service of James in 1716. The pamphlet was suppressed immediately on its appearance, but its contents have been republished, and they were certainly not of a character to render Bolingbroke any the less unpopular among Englishmen.

The correspondence consisted in a series of letters that passed between Bolingbroke, through his secretary, and Mr. James Murray, acting on behalf of James Stuart, from whom he afterwards received the title of Earl of Dunbar. The letters are little more than mere recriminations. Bolingbroke is accused of having brought about the failure of the insurrection of 1715 by weakness, folly, and even downright treachery. Bolingbroke flings back the charges at the head of James's friends, and even of James himself. There was nothing brought out in 1734 and 1735 to affect the career and conduct of Bolingbroke which all England



did not know pretty well already. Still, the revival of these old stories must have seemed to Bolingbroke very inconvenient and dangerous at such a time. The correspondence reminded England once more that Bolingbroke had been the agent of the exiled Stuarts in the work of stirring up a civil war for the overthrow of the House of Hanover. No doubt the publication quickened Bolingbroke's desire to get out of England. But he would have gone in any case; he would have had to go. The whole cabal with Pulteney had been a failure; Bolingbroke would thenceforward be a hindrance rather than a help to the "Patriots." His counsel was of no further avail, and he only brought odium on them; indeed, his advice had from first to last been misleading and ill-omened. The Patriots were now only anxious to get rid of him; Pulteney gave Bolingbroke pretty clearly to understand that they wanted him to go, and he went.

Walpole's speech could not but have a powerful effect on the general elections. Parliament was dissolved on April 16, 1734, after having nearly run the full course of seven years. Seldom has a general election been contested with such a prodigality of partisan fury and public corruption. The graver of Hogarth is said to have been employed then for the first time in political satire. Walpole scattered his purchase-money everywhere; he sowed with the sack and not with the hand, to adopt the famous saying applied to a Greek poetess by Pindar. In supporting two candidates for Norfolk, who were both beaten, despite his support, he spent out of his private fortune at least £10,000. One contemporary says £60,000. But the Opposition spent just as freely, more freely perhaps. It must be remembered that even so pure-minded a man as Burke has contended that "the charge of systematic corruption" was less applicable perhaps to Walpole "than to any other Minister who ever served the Crown for such a length of time." The Opposition were decidedly more reckless in their incitements to violence than the friends of the Ministry. "The Craftsman" boasted that when Walpole came to give his vote as an honorary freeman at Norwich the people called aloud to have the bribery oath

administered to him; called on him to swear that he had received no money for his vote. All the efforts of the Patriots, or the representatives of the country interest, as they now preferred to call themselves, failed to bring about the end they aimed at. They did, indeed, increase their parliamentary vote a little, but the increase was not enough to make any material difference in their position. All the wit, the eloquence, the craft, the courage, the unscrupulous use of every weapon of political warfare that could be seized and handled, had been thrown away. Walpole was, for the time, just as strong as ever.

We turn aside from the movement and rush of politics to lay a memorial spray on the grave of a good and a gifted man. Dr. Arbuthnot died in February, 1735, only sixty years old. "Poor Arbuthnot," Pulteney writes to Swift, "who grieved to see the wickedness of mankind, and was particularly esteemed of his own countrymen, is dead. He lived the last six months in a bad state of health, and hoping every night would be his last; not that he endured any bodily pain, but as he was quite weary of the world, and tired with so much bad company." Alderman Barber, in a letter to Swift a few days after, says much the same. He is afraid, he tells Swift, that Arbuthnot did not take as much care of himself as he ought to have done. "Possibly he might think the play not worth the candle. You may remember Dr. Garth said he was glad when he was dying; for he was weary of having his shoes pulled off and on." A letter from Arbuthnot himself to Swift, written a short time before his death, is not, however, filled with mere discontent, does not breathe only a morbid weariness of life, but rather testifies to a serene and noble resignation. "I am going," he tells Swift, "out of this troublesome world, and you, amongst the rest of my friends, shall have my last prayers and good wishes. I am afraid, my dear friend, we shall never see one another more in this world. I shall to the last moment preserve my love and esteem for you, being well assured you will never leave the paths of virtue and honour for all that is in the world. This world is not worth the least deviation from that way." Thus the great physician, scientific scholar, and humorist

awaited his death and died. We have spoken already in this history of Arbuthnot's marvellous humour and satire. Swift spoke of Arbuthnot in the highest terms. "He has more wit than we all have," was Swift's declaration, "and his humanity is equal to his wit." There are not many satirists known to men during all literary history of whom quite so much could be said with any faintest colour of a regard for truth. Swift was too warm in his friendly panegyric on Arbuthnot's humour, but he did not too highly estimate Arbuthnot's humanity. Humour is among man's highest gifts, and has done the world splendid service, but humour and humanity together make the mercy winged with brave actions, which, according to Massinger, befit "a soul moulded for heaven" and destined to be "made a star there."

## CHAPTER XXII

### THE "FAMILY COMPACT"

THE new Parliament met on January 14, 1735. The royal intimation was given to the House of Commons by the Lord Chancellor, that it was his Majesty's pleasure that they should return to their own House and choose a Speaker. Arthur Onslow was unanimously elected, or rather re-elected, to the chair he had filled with so much distinction in the former Parliament. The speech from the throne was not delivered until January 23. The speech was almost all taken up with foreign affairs, with the war on the Continent, and the efforts of the King and his Ministers, in combination with the States General of the United Provinces, to extinguish it. "I have the satisfaction to acquaint you," the King said, "that things are now brought to so great a forwardness that I hope in a short time a plan will be offered to the consideration of all the parties engaged in the present war, as a basis for a general negotiation of peace, in which the honour and the interest of all parties have been consulted as far as the



circumstances of time and the present posture of affairs would admit." The royal speech did not contain one single word which had to do with the internal condition of England, with the daily lives of the English people. No legislation was promised, or even hinted at, which concerned the domestic interests of these islands. The House of Lords set to work at once in the preparation of an Address in reply to the speech from the throne; and they, too, debated only of foreign affairs, and took no more account of their own fellow-countrymen than of the dwellers in Jupiter or Saturn.

The war, to which the royal speech referred, had been dragging along for some time. No quarrel could have less direct interest for the English people than that about which the Emperor Charles the Sixth and the King of France, Louis the Fifteenth, were fighting. On the death of Augustus the Second, of Poland, in February, 1733, Louis thought it a good opportunity for putting his own father-in-law, Stanislaus Leszczyński, back on the throne of Poland, from which he had twice been driven. Poland was a republic with an elective King, and a very peculiar form of constitution, by virtue of which any one of the estates or electoral colleges of the realm was in a position to stop the action of all the others at any crisis when decision was especially needed. The result of this was that the elected King was always a nominee of one or another of the great Continental Powers who took it on themselves to intervene in the affairs of Poland. The election of a King of Poland was always a mere struggle between these Powers: the strongest at the moment carried its man. Stanislaus, the father of Louis the Fifteenth's wife, had been a *protégé* of Charles the Twelfth of Sweden. He was a man of illustrious family and of great and varied abilities, a scholar and a writer. Charles drove Augustus the Second, Augustus, Elector of Saxony, from the throne of Poland, and set up Stanislaus in his place. Stanislaus, however, was driven out of the country by Augustus and his friends, who rallied and became strong in the temporary difficulties of Charles. When Charles found time to turn his attention to Poland he soon overthrew

Augustus and set up Stanislaus once again. But, "hide, blushing glory, hide, Pultowa's day," the fall of the great Charles came, and brought with it the fall of Stanislaus. Augustus re-entered Poland at the head of a Saxon army, and Stanislaus was compelled to abdicate. Now that Augustus was dead, Louis the Fifteenth determined to bring Stanislaus out from his retirement of many years and set him for the third time on the Polish throne. On the other hand, the Emperor and Russia alike favoured the son of the late King, another Augustus, Elector of Saxony. The French party carried Stanislaus, although at the time of his abdication, three or four-and-twenty years before, he had been declared incapable of ever again being elected King of Poland. The Saxon party, secretly backed up by Russia, resisted Stanislaus, attacked his partisans, drove him once more from Warsaw, and proclaimed Augustus the Third. Louis of France declared war, not on Russia, but on the Emperor, alleging that the Emperor had been the inspiration and support of the Saxon movement. A French army under Marshal Berwick, son of James the Second of England, crossed the Rhine and took the fort of Kehl—the scene of a memorable crossing of the Rhine, to be re-crossed very rapidly after, in days nearer to our own. Spain and Sardinia were in alliance with Louis, and the Emperor's army, although led by the great Eugene, "Der edle Ritter," was not able to make head against the French. The Emperor sent frequent urgent and impassioned appeals to England for assistance. George was anxious to lend him a helping hand, clamoured to be allowed to take the field himself, and win glory in battle; camps and battle-fields were what he loved most, he kept dinning into Walpole's unappreciative ear. Even the Queen was not disinclined to draw the sword in defence of an imperilled and harassed ally.

Walpole stuck to his policy of masterly inactivity. He would have wished to exclude Stanislaus from the Polish throne, but he was not willing to go to war with France. He could not bring himself to believe that the interests of England were concerned in the struggle to such a degree

as to warrant the waste of English money and the pouring out of English blood. But he did not take his stand on such a broad and clear position; indeed at that time it would not have been a firm or a tenable position. Walpole did not venture to say that the question whether this man or that was to sit on the throne of Poland was not worth the life of one British grenadier. The time had not come when even a great Minister might venture to look at an international quarrel from such a point of view. Walpole temporised; delayed; endeavoured to bring about a reconciliation of claims, endeavoured to get at something like a mediation; carried on prolonged negotiations with the Government of the Netherlands to induce the States General to join with England in an offer of mediation. The Emperor was all the time sending despatches to England, in which he bitterly complained that he had been deceived and deserted. He laid all the blame on Walpole's head. Pages of denunciation of Walpole and all Walpole's family are to be found in these imperial despatches. Walpole remained firm to his purpose. He would not go to war; but it did not suit him to proclaim his determination. He kept up his appearance of active negotiation, and he trusted to time to settle the question one way or the other before King George should get too restive and should insist on plunging into the war. He had many an uneasy hour; but his policy succeeded in the end.

The controversy out of which the war began was complicated by other questions and made formidable by the rival pursuit of other ends than those to be acknowledged in public treaty. It would be unjust and even absurd to suppose that Walpole's opponents believed England had a direct interest in the question of the Polish succession, or that they would have shed the blood of English grenadiers merely in order that this candidate and not that should be on the throne of Poland. What the Opposition contended was that the alliance of France and Spain was in reality directed quite as much against England as against the Emperor. In this they were perfectly right. It was directed as much against England as against the Emperor. Little more than forty years ago a collection of treaties and



engagements entered into by the Spanish branch of the Bourbon family found its way to the light of day in Madrid. The publication was the means of pouring a very flood of light on some events which perplexed and distracted the outer world in the days at which, in the course of this history, we have now arrived. We speak especially of the Polish war of succession and the policy pursued with regard to it by France and Spain. The collection of documents contained a copy of a treaty or arrangement entered into between the King of France and the King of Spain in 1733. This was, in fact, the first family compact, the first of a series of family compacts, entered into between the Bourbons in Versailles and the Bourbons in Madrid. The engagement, which in modern European history is conventionally known as "the family compact" between the Bourbon Houses, the compact of 1761, the compact which Burke described as "the most odious and formidable of all the conspiracies against the liberties of Europe that ever have been framed," was really only the third of a series. The second compact was in 1743. The object of these successive agreements was one and the same: to maintain and extend the possessions of the Bourbons in Europe and outside Europe, and to weaken and divide the supposed enemies of Bourbon supremacy. England was directly aimed at as one of the foremost of those enemies. In the compact of 1733 the King of France and the King of Spain pledged themselves to the interests of "the Most Serene Infant Don Carlos," afterwards for a time King of the Sicilies, and then finally King of Spain. The compact defined the alliance as "a mutual guarantee of all the possessions and the honour, interests, and glory" of the two Houses. It was described as an alliance to protect Don Carlos, and the family generally, against the Emperor and against England. France bound herself to aid Spain with all her forces by land or sea if Spain should see fit to suspend "England's enjoyment of commerce," and England should retaliate by hostilities on the dominions of Spain, within or outside of Europe. The French King also pledged himself to employ without interruption his most pressing instances to induce the King of

Great Britain to restore Gibraltar to Spain ; pledged himself even to use force for this purpose if necessary. There were full and precise stipulations about the disposition of armies and naval squadrons under various conditions. One article in the treaty bluntly declared that the foreign policy of both States, France and Spain, was to be "guided exclusively by the interests of the House." The engagement was to be kept secret, and was to be regarded "from that day as an eternal and irrevocable family compact." No conspiracy ever could have been more flagrant, more selfish, and more cruel. The deeper we get into the secrets of European history, the more we come to learn the truth that the crowned conspirators were always the worst.

This first family compact is the key to all the subsequent history of European wars down to the days of the French Revolution. The object of one set of men was to maintain and add to the advantages secured to them by the Treaty of Utrecht ; the object of another set of men was to shake themselves free from the disadvantages and disqualifications which that treaty imposed on them. The Bourbon family were possessed with the determination to maintain the position in Spain which the will of Charles the Second had bequeathed to them, and which after so many years of war and blood had been ratified by the Treaty of Utrecht. They wanted to maintain their position in Spain ; but they wanted not that alone. They wanted much more. They wanted to plant a firm foot in Italy ; they wanted to annex border provinces to France ; they saw that their great enemy was England, and they wanted to weaken and to damage her. No reasonable Englishman can find fault with the Kings of Spain for their desire to recover Gibraltar. An English Sovereign would have conspired with any foreign State for the recovery of Dover Castle and rock if these were held by a Spanish invader too strong to be driven out by England single-handed. Many Englishmen were of opinion then, some are of opinion now, that it would be an act of wise and generous policy to give Gibraltar back to the Spanish people. But no Englishman could possibly doubt that

if England were determined to keep Gibraltar she must hold it her duty to watch with the keenest attention every movement which indicated an alliance between France and Spain.

Spain had at one time sought security for her interests, and a new chance for her ambitions, by alliance with the Emperor. Of late she had found that the Emperor generally got all the subsidies and all the other advantages of the alliance, and that Spain was left rather worse off after each successive settlement than she had been before it. The family compact between the two Houses of Bourbon was one result of her experience in this way. Of course, when we talk of France and Spain, we are talking merely of the courts and the families. The people of France and Spain were never consulted, and, indeed, were never thought of, in these imperial and regal engagements. Nor at this particular juncture had the King of Spain much more to do with the matter than the humblest of his people. King Philip the Fifth was a hypochondriac, a half-demented creature, almost a madman. He was now the tame and willing subject of the most absolute petticoat government. His second wife, Elizabeth of Parma, ruled him with firm, unswerving hand. Her son, Don Carlos, was heir in her right to the Duchies of Parma and Placentia, but she was ambitious of a brighter crown for him, and went into the war with an eye to the throne of Naples. The Emperor soon found that he could not hold out against the alliance, and consented to accept the mediation of England and the United Provinces.

The negotiations were long and dragging. Many times it became apparent that Louis on his part was only pretending a willingness to compromise and make peace in order to strengthen himself the more for the complete prosecution of a successful war. At last a plan of pacification was agreed upon between England and Holland; and at the same time the King of England entered into an alliance, offensive and defensive, with the King of Denmark, this latter treaty, as George significantly described it in the speech from the throne, "of great importance in the present conjuncture." These engagements did not pass



without severe criticism in Parliament. It was pointed out, with effect, that the nation had for some time back been engaged in making treaty after treaty, each new engagement being described as essential to the safety of the empire, but each proving in turn to be utterly inefficacious. In the House of Lords a dissatisfied peer described the situation very well. "The last treaty," he said, "always wanted a new one in order to carry it into execution, and thus, my Lords, we have been a-botching and piecing up one treaty with another for several years." The botching and piecing up did not in this instance prevent the outbreak of the war. The opposing forces, after long delays, at length rushed at each other, and, as was said in the speech from the throne at the opening of the session of 1736, "the war was carried on in some parts in such a manner as to give very just apprehensions that it would unavoidably become general, from an absolute necessity of preserving that balance of power on which the safety and commerce of the maritime powers so much depend." With any other Minister than Walpole to manage affairs, England would unquestionably have been drawn into the war. Walpole's strong determination and ingenious delays carried his policy through.

The war has one point of peculiar and romantic interest for Englishmen. Prince Charles Stuart, the "bonnie Prince Charlie" of a later date, the hero and darling of so much devotion, poetry, and romance, received his baptism of fire in the Italian campaign under Don Carlos. Charles was then a mere boy. He was born in the later days of 1720, and was now about the age to serve some picturesque princess as her page. He was sent as a volunteer to the siege of Gaeta in 1734, and was received with every mark of honour by Don Carlos. The English court heard rumours that Don Carlos had gone out of his way to pay homage to the Stuart prince, and had even acted in a manner to give the impression that he identified himself with the cause of the exiled family. There were demands for explanation made by the English Minister at the Spanish court, and explanations were given and excuses offered. It was all merely because of a request made by the Duke of Berwick's son, the Spanish Prime Minister

said. The Duke of Berwick's son asked permission to bring his cousin Charles to serve as a volunteer, and the court of Spain consented, not seeing the slightest objection to such a request ; but there was not the faintest idea of receiving the boy as a King's son. King George and Queen Caroline were both very angry, but Walpole wisely told them that they must either resent the offence thoroughly, and by war, or accept the explanations and pretend to be satisfied with them. Walpole's advice prevailed, and the boy prince fleshed his maiden sword without giving occasion to George the Second to seek the ensanguined laurels for which he told Walpole he had long been thirsting. The Hanoverian kings were, to do them justice, generally rather magnanimous in their way of treating the pretensions of the exiled family. We may fairly assume that the conduct of the Spanish prince in this instance did somewhat exceed legitimate bounds. George was wise, however, in consenting to accept the explanations, and to make as little of the incident as the court of Spain professed to do.

Incidents such as this, and the interchange of explanations which had to follow them, naturally tended to stretch out the negotiations for peace which England was still carrying on. Again and again it seemed as if the attempts to bring about a settlement of the controversy must all be doomed to failure. At last, however, terms of arrangement were concluded. Augustus was acknowledged King of Poland. Stanislaus was allowed to retain the royal title, and was put in immediate possession of the Duchy of Lorraine, which after his death was to become a province of France. The Spanish prince obtained the throne of the Two Sicilies. France was thought to have done a great thing for herself by the annexation of Lorraine ; in later times it seemed to have been an ill-omened acquisition. The terms of peace were on the whole about as satisfactory as any one could have expected. Walpole certainly had got all he wanted. He wanted to keep England out of the war, and he wanted at the same time to maintain and to reassert her influence over the politics of the Continent. He accomplished both these objects.

Bolingbroke said it was only Walpole's luck. History more truly says it was Walpole's patience and genius.

Did Walpole know all this time that there was a distinct and deliberate family compact, a secret treaty of alliance, a formal, circumstantial, binding agreement, consigned to written words, between France and Spain, for the promotion of their common desires and for the crippling of England's power? Mr. J. R. Green appears to be convinced that "neither England nor Walpole" knew of it. The English people certainly did not know of it, and it is commonly taken for granted by historians that while Walpole was pursuing his policy of peace he was not aware of the existence of this family compact. It has even been pleaded, in defence of him and his policy, that he did not know that the war, in which he believed England to have little or no interest, was only one outcome of a secret plot, having for its object, among other objects, the humiliation and the detriment of England. There are writers who seem to assume it as a matter of certainty that if Walpole had known of this family compact he would have adopted a very different course. But does it by any means follow that, even if he had been all the time in possession of a correct copy of the secret agreement, he would have acted otherwise than he did act? Does it follow that if Walpole did know all about it he was wrong in adhering to his policy of non-intervention? A very interesting and instructive essay by Professor Seeley on the House of Bourbon, published in the first number of the *English Historical Review*, makes clear as light the place of this first family compact in the history of the wars that succeeded it. Professor Seeley puts it beyond dispute that in every subsequent movement of France and Spain the working of this compact has become apparent. He shows that it was fraught with the most formidable danger to England. Inferentially he seems to convey the idea that Walpole was wrong when he clung to his policy of masterly inactivity, and that he ought to have intervened in the interests of England. We admit all his premises and reject his conclusion.

Walpole might well have thought that the best way to



mar the object of the conspirators against England was to keep England as much as possible out of Continental wars. He might well have thought that so long as England was prosperous and strong she could afford to smile at the machinations of any foreign kings and statesmen. We may be sure that he would not have allowed himself to be drawn away from the path of policy he thought it expedient to follow by any mere feelings of anger at the enmity of the foreign kings and statesmen. He might have felt as a composed and strong-minded man would feel who, quite determined not to sit down to the gaming table, is amused by the signals which he sees passing between the cheating confederates who are making preparations to win his money. Besides, even if he knew nothing of the family compact, he certainly was not ignorant of the general scope of the policy of France and of Spain. He was not a man likely at any time to put too much trust in princes or in any other persons, and we need not doubt that in making his calculations he took into full account the possibility of France and Spain conspiring for the injury of England. The existence of the family compact is a very interesting fact in history, and enables us now to understand with perfect clearness many things that must have perplexed and astonished the readers of an earlier day. But, so far as the policy of Walpole regarding the war of the Polish Succession was concerned, we do not believe that it would have been modified to any considerable extent, even if he had been in full possession of all the secret papers in the cabinet of the King of France and the Queen of Spain.

But is it certain that Walpole did not know of the existence of this secret treaty? It is certain now that if he did not know of it he might have known. Other English statesmen of the day did know of it—at least, had heard that such a thing was in existence, and were or might have been forewarned against it. Professor Seeley puts it beyond doubt that the family compact was talked of and written of by English diplomatists at the time, was believed in by some, treated sceptically by others. The Duke of Newcastle actually called it by the very name which history formally gives to the arrangement made many years after

and denounced by Burke. He speaks of "the offensive and defensive alliance between France and Spain, called the *pacte de famille*." Is it likely, is it credible, that Walpole had never heard of the existence of a compact which was known to the Duke of Newcastle? Archdeacon Coxe in his "Life of Walpole" contends that Newcastle was not by any means the merely absurd sort of person that most historians and biographers delight to paint him. "He had a quick comprehension, and was a ready debater," Coxe says, "although without grace or style." "He wrote with uncommon facility and great variety of expression, and in his most confidential letters, written so quickly as to be almost illegible, there is scarcely a single alteration or erasure." But certainly Newcastle was not a man likely to keep to himself the knowledge of such a fact as the family compact, or even the knowledge that some people believed in the existence of such an arrangement. For ourselves, we are quite prepared to assume that Walpole had heard of the family compact, but that it did not disturb his calculations or disarrange his policy. From some of his own letters written at the time it is evident that he did not put any faith in the abiding nature of family compacts between sovereigns. More than once he takes occasion to point out that where political interests interfered family arrangements went to the wall. As to the general rule Walpole was quite right. We have seen the fact illustrated over and over again even in our own days. But Walpole appears to have overlooked the important peculiarity of this family compact; it was an engagement in which the political interests and the domestic interests of the families were at last inextricably intertwined; it was a reciprocal agreement for the protection of common interests and the attainment of common objects. Such a compact might be trusted to hold good even among Bourbon princes. On the whole we are inclined to come to the conclusion that if Walpole knew anything about the compact—and we think he did know something about it—he was quite right in not allowing it to disturb his policy of non-intervention, but that he was not quite sound in his judgment if he held his peaceful course only because he did not believe that such a family bond

between members of such a family would hold good. "Tenez, prince," the Duc d'Aumale wrote to Prince Napoleon-Jérôme in a pamphlet which was once famous, "there is one promise of a Bonaparte which we can always believe—the promise that he will kill somebody." One pledge of a Bourbon with another Bourbon the world could always rely upon—the pledge to maintain a common interest and gratify a common ambition.

The war cost one illustrious life, that of the brave and noble Duke of Berwick, whom Montesquieu likened to the best of the heroes of Plutarch, or rather in whom Montesquieu declared that he saw the best of Plutarch's heroes in the flesh. When Bolingbroke was denouncing the set of men who surrounded James Stuart at St. Germain, he specially exempted Berwick from reproach. He spoke of Berwick as one "who has a hundred times more capacity and credit than all the rest put together," but added significantly that he "is not to be reckoned of the court, though he has lodgings in the house." When the day of James's destiny as King of England was over, Berwick gave his bright sword to the service of France. He became a naturalised Frenchman and rose to the command of the French army. He won the splendid victory of Almanza over the combined forces of England and her various allies. "A Roman by a Roman valiantly o'ercome," defeated Englishmen might have exclaimed. He was killed by a cannon-ball on ground not far from that whereon the great Turenne had fallen, killed by the cannon-ball which, according to Madame de Sévigné, was charged from all eternity for the hero's death. Berwick was well deserving of a death in some nobler struggle than the trumpery quarrel got up by ignoble ambitions and selfish, grasping policies. He ought to have died in some really great cause. It was an age of gallant soldiers—an age, however, that brought out none more gallant than Berwick. Of him it might fairly be said that "his mourners were two hosts, his friends and foes." This unmeaning little war—unmeaning in the higher sense—was also the last campaign of the illustrious Prince Eugene. Eugene did all that a general could do to hold up against overwhelming odds, and but for him the victory



of the French would have been complete. The short remainder of his life was passed in peace.

Walpole gave satisfaction to some of those who disliked his peace policy by the energy with which he entered into the settlement of a petty quarrel between Spain and Portugal. The dispute turned on a merely personal question concerning the arrest and imprisonment of some servants of the Portuguese Minister at Madrid. Walpole was eagerly appealed to by Portugal, and he took up her cause promptly. He went so far as to make a formidable "naval demonstration," as we should now call it, in her favour. But he was reasonable, and he was determined that Portugal too should be reasonable. He recommended her to show a willingness to come to terms, while at the same time he brought so much pressure to bear on Spain that Spain at last consented to refer the whole dispute to the arbitrament of England and France. The quarrel was settled, and a convention was signed at Madrid in July 1736. It was a small matter, but it might at such a time have led to serious and increasing complications if it had been allowed to go too far. Walpole unquestionably showed great judgment and firmness in his conduct, and he bore himself with entire impartiality. Spain was in the wrong, he thought, but not so absolutely or wilfully in the wrong as to justify Portugal in standing out for too stringent terms of reparation. At one time it seemed almost probable that the English Minister would have to employ force to coerce his own client into terms as well as the other party to the suit. But Walpole "put his foot down," as the modern phrase goes, and the danger was averted. Even Cardinal Fleury, who co-operated with Walpole in bringing about the settlement, thought at one time that Walpole was too strenuous and was likely to overshoot the mark.

England had troubles enough of her own and at home about this time to occupy and absorb the attention of the most devoted Minister. To do Walpole justice, it was no fault of his if the activity of English statesmanship was compelled to engage itself rather in the composing of petty quarrels between Spain and Portugal than in any continuous effort to improve the condition of the population

of these islands. He had at least a full comprehension of the fact that domestic prosperity has a good deal to do with sound finance, and that sound finance depends very much upon a sound foreign policy. But the utter defeat of his excise scheme had put Walpole out of the mood for making experiments which might prove to be in advance of the age. He had no ambition to be in advance of his age. He was not dispirited or disheartened; he was not a man to be dispirited or disheartened, but he was made cautious. He had got into a frame of mind with regard to financial reform something like that into which the younger Pitt grew in his later years with regard to Catholic emancipation: he knew what ought to be done, but felt that he was not able to do it, and therefore shrugged his shoulders and let the world go its way. Walpole was honestly proud of his peace policy; more than once he declared with exultation that, while there were fifty thousand men killed in Europe during the struggle just ended, the field of dead did not contain the body of a single Englishman. Seldom in the history of England has English statesmanship had such a tale to tell.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### ROYAL FAMILY AFFAIRS

GEORGE and his wife Caroline Wilhelmina Dorothea had a somewhat large family. Their eldest son, Frederick Lewis, Prince of Wales and Duke of Gloucester, was born on January 20, 1707. Two other sons died, one the moment after his birth, the other after scarcely a year of breath. William Augustus, Duke of Cumberland, was born in 1721. There were five daughters: Anne, Amelia or Emily, Caroline, Mary, and Louisa. The Princess Caroline seems to have been by far the most lovable of the whole family. She inherited much of her mother's cleverness without her mother's coarseness. "Princess Caroline," says Lord Hervey, "had affability without meanness, dignity without

pride, cheerfulness without levity, and prudence without falsehood." Her figure indeed is one of the bright redeeming visions in all that chapter of Court history. She stands out among the rough, coarse, self-seeking men and women somewhat as Sophy Western does among the personages of "Tom Jones." Her tender inclination towards Lord Hervey makes her seem all the more sweet and womanly; her influence over him is always apparent. He never speaks of her without seeming to become at once more manly and gentle, strong and sweet. Of the other princesses, Emily had perhaps the most marked character, but there would appear to have been little in her to admire. Hervey says of her that she had the least sense of all the family, except indeed her brother Frederick; and we shall soon come to appreciate the significance of this comparison.

Frederick, the eldest son, like George the Second himself, had not been allowed to come to England in his early days. The young prince had just entered his twenty-second year when, on the accession of his father to the throne, he was brought over to this country and created Prince of Wales. At that time he was well spoken of generally, although even then it was known to every one that he was already addicted to some of the vices of his father and his grandfather. The Court of Hanover was not a good school for the training of young princes. The Sovereign of Hanover was a positive despot, both politically and socially. Everything had to be done to please him, to amuse him, to conciliate him. The women around the court were always vying with each other to see who should most successfully flatter the King, or, in the King's absence, the Royal Prince. It was intellectually a very stupid court. Its pleasures were vulgar, its revels coarse, its whole atmosphere heavy and sensuous. Frederick was said, however, to have given some evidence of a more cultivated taste than might have been expected of a Hanoverian Crown Prince. He was believed to have some appreciation of letters and music. When he settled in London he very soon began to follow the example of his father and his grandfather; he threw his handkerchief to this lady and to that, and the handkerchief was in certain cases very thank-



fully taken up. Some people said that he entered on this way of life not so much because he really had a strong predilection for it as because he thought it would be unbecoming of the position of a Prince of Wales not to have an adequate number of women favourites about him. So he maintained what seemed to him the dignity of his place in society and in the State.

"The Prince's character at his first coming over," says Hervey in his most piquant vein, "though little more respectable, seemed much more amiable than, upon his opening himself further and being better known, it turned out to be; for, though there appeared nothing in him to be admired, yet there seemed nothing in him to be hated—neither anything great nor anything vicious. His behaviour was something that gained one's good wishes though it gave one no esteem for him; for his best qualities, whilst they prepossessed one the most in his favour, always gave one a degree of contempt for him at the same time." Though his manners had the show of benevolence from a good deal of natural or habitual civility, yet his habit of cajoling everybody, and almost in an equal degree, made what might have been thought favours if more "sparingly bestowed, lose all their weight." "He carried this affectation of general benevolence so far that he often condescended below the character of a prince; and, as people attributed this familiarity to popular and not particular motives, so it only lessened their respect without increasing their goodwill, and, instead of giving them good impressions of his humanity, only gave them ill ones of his sincerity. He was indeed as false as his capacity would allow him to be, and was more capable in that walk than in any other, never having the least hesitation, from principle or fear of future detection, in telling any lie that served his present purpose. He had a much weaker understanding, and, if possible, a more obstinate temper than his father; that is, more tenacious of opinions he had once formed, though less capable of ever forming right ones. Had he had one grain of merit at the bottom of his heart, one should have had compassion for him in the situation to which his miserable poor head soon reduced him, for his

case in short was this: he had a father that abhorred him, a mother that despised him, sisters that betrayed him, a brother set up against him, and a set of servants that neglected him, and were neither of use nor capable of being of use to him, nor desirous of being so."

The King's eldest daughter, Anne, was married soon after Frederick's coming to England. Up to the age of twenty-four she had remained unmarried, a long time for a princess to continue a spinster. Many years before she had had a good chance of marrying Louis the Fifteenth of France. George was anxious for the marriage; the Duc de Bourbon, then Minister to Louis, had originated the idea; Anne was only sixteen years old, and would no doubt have offered no objection. But the scheme fell through because when it was well on its way somebody suddenly remembered, what every one might have thought of before, that if the English Princess became Queen of France she would be expected to conform to the religion of the State. Political rather than religious considerations made this settle the matter in the English Court. George and Caroline had certainly no prejudices themselves in favour of one form of religion over another, or of any form of religion over none; but, as they held the English crown by virtue of their at least professing to be Protestants, and as the Chevalier would most assuredly have got that crown if he had even professed to be a Protestant, it did not seem possible that they could countenance a change of Church on the part of their daughter. Years passed away and no husband was offering himself to Anne. Now at last she was determined that she would wait no longer. Suddenly the Prince of Orange was induced to ask her to be his wife. She had never seen him; he was known to be ugly and deformed; King George was opposed to the proposition, and told his daughter that the Prince was the ugliest man in Holland. Anne was determined not to refuse the offer; she said she would marry him if he were a Dutch baboon. "Very well," retorted the King angrily; "you will find him baboon enough, I can tell you."

The Princess persevered, however; she was as firmly resolved to get married as Miss Hoyden in Vanbrugh's

“Relapse.” The King sent a message to Parliament announcing the approaching marriage of his daughter to the Prince of Orange, and graciously intimating that he expected the House of Commons to help him to give the Princess a marriage portion. The loyal Commons undertook to find eighty thousand pounds, although George was surely rich enough to have paid his daughter’s dowry out of his own pocket. George, however, had not the remotest notion of doing anything of the kind. The Bill was run through the House of Commons in a curious sort of way, the vote for the dowry being thrown in with a little bundle of miscellaneous votes, as if the House of Commons were rather anxious to keep it out of public sight, as indeed they probably were. The bridegroom came to England in November 1733, and began his career in this country by falling very ill. It took him months to recover, and it was not until March 24, 1734, that the marriage was celebrated. It must have been admitted by Anne that her father had not misrepresented the personal appearance of the Prince of Orange. The Queen shed abundance of tears at the sight of the bridegroom, and yet could not help sometimes bursting into a fit of laughter at his oddity and ugliness. Anne bore her awkward position with a sort of stolid composure which was almost dignity. To add to the other unsatisfactory conditions of the marriage, the prophets of evil began to point to the ominous conjunction of names—an English princess married to a Prince of Orange. When this happened last, what followed? The expulsion of the father-in-law by the son-in-law. Go to, then!

On the same day on which the House of Commons voted the grant of the Princess’s dowry a memorial from the council and representatives of the colony or province of Massachusetts Bay, in New England, was presented and read from the table. The memorial set forth that the province was placed under conditions of difficulty and distress owing to a royal instruction given to the Governor of the province restraining the emission of its bills of credit and restricting the disposal of its public money. The memorial, which seems to have been couched in the most proper and becoming language, prayed that the House would allow the



agent for the province to be heard at the bar, and that the House, if satisfied of the justice of the request, would use its influence with the King in order that he might be graciously pleased to withdraw the instructions as contrary to the rights of the charter of Massachusetts Bay, and tending in their nature to distress if not to ruin the province. The House of Commons treated this petition with the most sovereign contempt. After a very short discussion, if it could even be called a discussion, the House passed a resolution declaring the complaint "frivolous and groundless, a high insult upon his Majesty's Government, and tending to shake off the dependency of the said colony upon this kingdom, to which by law and right they are and ought to be subject." The petition was therefore rejected. To the short summary of this piece of business contained in the parliamentary debates the comment is quietly added, "We shall leave to future ages to make remarks upon this resolution, but it seems not much to encourage complaints to Parliament from any of our colonies in the West Indies." Not many ages, not many years even, had to pass before emphatic comment on such a mode of dealing with the complaints of the American colonies was made by the American colonists themselves. Massachusetts Bay took sterner measures next time to make her voice heard and get her wrongs redressed. Just twenty years after the insulting and contemptuous rejection of the petition of Massachusetts Bay the people of Boston spilt the stores of tea into Boston Harbour, and two years later still "the embattled farmer," as Emerson calls him, stood up to the British troops at Lexington, in Massachusetts, and began the War of Independence.

On Wednesday, May 30, the second reading of the Bill for the Princess's dowry came on in the House of Lords. Several of the peers complained warmly of the manner in which the grant to the Princess had been stuck into a general measure disposing of various sums of money. It was a Bill of items. There was a sum of £500,000 for the current service of the year. There was £10,000 by way of charity "for those distressed persons who are to transport themselves to the colony of Georgia." There was a

vote for the repairing of an old church, and there were other votes of much the same kind; and amid them came the item for the dowry of the Royal Princess. The Earl of Winchelsea complained of this strange method of huddling things together, and declared it highly unbecoming to see the grant made "in such a hotch-potch Bill—a Bill which really seems to be the sweepings of the other House." The Earl of Crawford declared it a most indecent thing to provide the marriage portion of the Princess Royal of England in such a manner; "it is most disrespectful to the Royal Family." The Duke of Newcastle could only say in defence of the course taken by the Government that he saw nothing disrespectful or inconvenient in the manner of presenting the vote. Indeed, he went on to argue, or rather to assert, for he did not attempt to argue, that it was the only way by which such a provision could have been made. It could not well have been done by a particular Bill, he said, because the marriage was not as yet fully concluded. But the resolution of the House of Commons was that "out of the money then remaining in the receipt of the Exchequer arisen by the sale of the lands in the island of St. Christopher's" his Majesty be enabled to apply the sum of £80,000 for the marriage portion of the Princess Royal. What possible difficulty there could be about the presenting of that resolution in the form of a separate Bill, or how such a form of presentation could have been affected by the fact that the marriage had not yet actually been concluded, only a brain like that of the Duke of Newcastle could settle. Of course the Bill was passed; each noble Lord who criticised it was louder than the other in declaring that he had not the slightest notion of opposing it. "I am so fond," said the Earl of Winchelsea, "of enabling his Majesty to provide a sufficient marriage portion for the Princess Royal that I will not oppose this Bill." There was much excuse for being fond of providing his Majesty in this instance, seeing that the money was not to be found by the taxpayers. Probably the true reason why the grant was asked in a manner which would not be thought endurable in our days was that the Government well knew

the King himself cared as little about the marriage as the people did, and were of opinion that, the more the grant was huddled up, the better.

We get one or two notes about this time that seem to have a forecast of later days in them. An explosion of some kind took place in Westminster Hall while all the courts of justice were sitting. No great harm seems to have been done, but the event naturally startled people and was instantly regarded as evidence of a Jacobite plot to assassinate somebody; it was not very clear who was the particular object of hatred. Walpole wrote to his brother, telling him of the explosion, and adding, "There is no reason to doubt that the whole thing was projected and executed by a set of low Jacobites who talked of setting fire to the gallery built for the marriage of the Princess Royal" by means of "a preparation which they call phosphorus, that takes fire by the air." About the same time, too, we hear of an outbreak of anti-Irish riots in Shoreditch and other parts of the east end of London. The "cry and complaint" of the anti-Irish was, as Walpole described the matter, that they were underworked and starved by Irishmen. Numbers of Irishmen, it would seem, were beginning to come over to this country, not merely to labour in harvesting in the rural districts, as they had long been accustomed to do, but undertaking work of all kinds at lower wages than English workmen were accustomed to receive. "The cry is: Down with the Irish!" Walpole says; and Dr. Sheridan, Swift's correspondent, proclaiming in terms of humorous exaggeration his desire to get out of Cavan, protests that, failing all other means of relief, "I will try England, where the predominant phrase is: Down with the Irish."

George had at one time set his heart upon a double alliance between his family and that of King Frederick William of Prussia. The desire of George was that his eldest son Frederick should marry the eldest daughter of the Prussian King, and that the Prussian King's eldest son should marry George's second daughter. The negotiation, however, came to nothing. The King of Prussia was prevailed upon to make objections to it by those around



him who feared that he might be brought too much under the influence of England; and, indeed, it is said that he himself became a little afraid of some possible interference with his ways by an English daughter-in-law. The only interest the project has now is that it put the two Kings into bad humour with each other. The bad humour was constantly renewed by the quarrels arising out of the King of Prussia's rough, imperious way of sending recruiting parties into Hanover to cajole or carry off gigantic recruits for his big battalions. So unkingly did the dispute at last become that George actually sent a challenge to Frederick William, and Frederick William accepted it. A place was arranged where the royal duellists, each crossing his own frontier for the purpose, were to meet in combat. The wise and persistent opposition of a Prussian statesman prevailed upon Frederick to give up the idea, and George too suffered himself to be talked into something like reason. It is almost a pity for the amusement of posterity that the duel did not come off. It would have almost been a pity, if the fight had come off, that both the combatants should not have been killed. The King of Prussia and the King of England were, it may safely be said, the two most coarse and brutal Sovereigns of the civilised world at the time. The King of Prussia was more cruel in his coarseness than the King of England. The King of England was more indecent in his coarseness than the King of Prussia. For all their royal rank, it must be owned that they were *Arcades ambo*—that is, according to Byron's translation, "blackguards both."

The fight, however, did not come off, and George had still to find a wife for his eldest son. She was found in the person of the Princess Augusta, sister of the Duke of Saxe-Gotha. The Duke gave his consent; the Princess offered no opposition, and indeed would not have been much listened to if she had had any opposition to offer. King George wished his son to get married to anybody rather than remain longer unmarried; and the Prince, who had tried to make a runaway match with a young English lady before this time, appeared to be absolutely indifferent on the subject. So the Princess Augusta was brought over to

Greenwich, and thence to London, and on April 28, 1736, the marriage took place. The Princess seems to have been a very amiable, accomplished, and far from unattractive young woman. The Prince of Wales grew to be very fond of her, and to be happy in the home she made him. He continued, of course, to follow the ways of his father and his grandfather, and had his mistresses as well as his wife. The Prince of Wales would probably have thought he was not acting properly the part of royalty if he had been contented with the companionship of one woman, and that woman his wife. His wife had to put up with the palace manners of the period. Frederick had at one time been noted for his dutiful ways to his mother; but more lately the mother and son had become hopelessly estranged. George hated Frederick, and the hatred of the mother for the son seemed quite as strong as that of the father.

A courtly chronicler and genealogist, writing at a period a little later, describes George the Second as in the height of glory a just and merciful Prince, but dryly adds, "He resembles his father in his too great attachment to his electoral dominions." So indeed he did. The whole policy of his reign was affected or controlled by his love for Hanover, or, at least, his love for his own interest in Hanover. He had no patriotic or unselfish attachment to the land of his ancestry and his birth; he was incapable of feeling any such exalted emotion. But the electoral dominions, which were his property, he clung to with ardour, and Hanover was the garden of the pleasures he enjoyed most highly. He never could understand English ways. He once scolded an English nobleman, the Duke of Grafton, for his delight in the hunting-field. It was a pretty occupation, the King said, for a man of the Duke's years, and of his rank, "to spend so much of his time in tormenting a poor fox, that was generally a much better beast than any of those that pursued him; for the fox hurts no other animal but for his subsistence, while the brutes who hurt the fox did it only for the pleasure they took in hurting." One might admire such a declaration if it could be thought to come from a too refined and sensitive humanity. An eccentric, but undoubtedly benevolent,

member of the House of Commons declared, in a speech made in that House some years ago, that he only once joined in a hunt, and then it was only in the interest of the fox. George had no such feeling; he simply could not understand the tastes or the sports of English country life.

George came back from an expedition to Hanover in a very bad humour. He hated everything in England; he loved everything in Hanover. It was with the uttermost reluctance that he dragged himself back from the place of his amusements and his most cherished amours. He had lately found in Hanover a new object of adoration. This was a Madame Walmoden, a fashionable young married woman, with whom George had fallen headlong in love. He wrote home to his wife, telling her of his admiration for Madame Walmoden, and describing with some minuteness the lady's various charms of person. He induced Madame Walmoden—probably no great persuasion was needed—to leave her husband and become the mistress of a king. George, it is said, paid down the not very extravagant sum of a thousand dollars to make things pleasant all round. During his stay in Hanover he and his new companion behaved quite like a High-Dutch Antony and Cleopatra. They had revels and orgies of all kinds in the midst of a crowd of companions as refined and intellectual as themselves. George had paintings made of some of these scenes, with portrait likenesses of those who took a leading part in them, and these paintings he brought home to England, and was accustomed to exhibit and explain to the Queen, or to anybody else who happened to be in the way. But he did not as yet venture to bring Madame Walmoden to England; and his having to part with her threw him into a very bad temper. The curious reader will find many an amusing, but at the same time very painful, account of the manner in which George vented his temper by snubbing his children and insulting his wife. The Queen bore it all with her wonted patience. George had made a promise to get back to Hanover very soon to see his beloved Madame Walmoden. Walpole restrained him for a long time, which made the King more and more angry. Once, when the Queen was urging him to be a little more considerate in



his dealings with some of the bishops, the King of England, Defender of the Faith, told her he was sick of all that foolish stuff, and added, "I wish with all my heart that the devil may take all your bishops, and the devil take your minister, and the devil take the Parliament, and the devil take the whole island, provided I can get out of it and go to Hanover." Caroline herself could be sharp enough in her tone with the bishops sometimes, but the manners of the King seemed to her to go beyond the bounds of reason.

The King was determined to get back to Hanover by a certain date. Walpole swore to some of his friends that the King should not go. The King did go, however, and left the Queen to act as regent of the kingdom during his absence. This time George was to be absent from his wife on his birthday, and the poor Queen took this bitterly to heart. She consulted Walpole, and Walpole was frank, although on this particular occasion he does not seem to have been coarse. He reminded the Queen that she was ceasing to be young and attractive, and, as it was necessary that she must keep a hold over the King's regard, he strongly urged her to write to George and ask him to bring Madame Walmoden over to England with him. Even this the Queen, after some moments of agonised mental struggle, consented to do. She wrote to the King, and she began to make preparations for the suitable reception of the new sultana. She carried her complacency so far as even to say that she would be willing to take Madame Walmoden into her own service. Even Walpole thought this was carrying humbleness too far. "Why not?" poor Caroline asked; was not Lady Suffolk, a former mistress of the King, in the Queen's employment? Walpole pointed out, with the worldly good sense which belonged to him, that public opinion would draw a great distinction between the scandal of the King's making one of the Queen's servants his mistress and the Queen's taking one of the King's mistresses into her service.

The quarrels between the Prince of Wales and the other members of the royal family kept on increasing in virulence. The Prince surrounded himself with "the Patriots," and

indeed openly put himself at their head. The King and Queen would look at no one who was seen in the companionship of the Prince. The Queen is believed to have at one time cherished some schemes for separating the Electorate of Hanover from the English Crown, in order that Hanover might be given to her second son. With the outer public the Prince of Wales seems to have been popular in a certain sense, perhaps for no other reason than because he was the Prince of Wales and not the King. When he went to one of the theatres he was loudly cheered, and he took the applause with the gratified complacency of one who knows he is receiving nothing that he has not well deserved. He would appear to have been continually posturing and attitudinising as the young favourite of the people. The truth is that the people in general knew very little about the Prince, and knew a good deal about the King, and naturally leaned to the side of the man who might at least turn out to be better than his father.

Even the seraphic realms of music were invaded by the dispute between the adherents of the King and the adherents of the Prince. The King and Queen were supporters of Handel, the Prince was against the great composer. The Prince in the first instance declared against Handel because his sister Anne, the Princess of Orange, was one of Handel's worshippers. Therefore a great number of the nobility who sided with the Prince set up, or at least supported, a rival opera-house to that in which Handel's music was the great attraction. The King and Queen, Lord Hervey tells, were as much in earnest on this subject as their son and daughter, though they had the prudence to disguise it, or to endeavour to disguise it, a little more. They were both Handelists, "and sat freezing constantly at his empty Haymarket opera, whilst the Prince, with all the chief of the nobility, went as constantly to that of Lincoln's Inn Fields." "The affair," Hervey adds, "grew as serious as that of the Greens and the Blues under Justinian at Constantinople; an anti-Handelist was looked upon as an anti-courtier, and voting against the court in Parliament was hardly a less remissible or more venial sin than speaking against Handel or going

to the Lincoln's Inn Fields opera." Hervey was a man of some culture and some taste; it is curious to observe how little he thought of the greatest musician of his time, one of the very greatest musicians of all time. The London public evidently could not have been gifted with very high musical perception just then. Indeed, later on, when Handel brought out his "Messiah," it was met with so cold and blank a reception in London that the composer began to despair of the English public ever appreciating his greatest efforts. He made up his mind to try his "Messiah" in Ireland. He went to Dublin and there found a splendid reception for his masterpiece, and he remained there until the echo of his great success had made itself heard in England, and he then came back and found his welcome in London. This, however, is anticipating. At present we are only concerned with the fact, as illustrating the existing condition of things in London, that to be an admirer of Handel was to be an enemy of the Prince of Wales, and not to be an admirer of Handel was to be an enemy of the King. The feud ran so high that the Princess Royal said she expected in a little while to see half the House of Lords playing in the orchestra in their robes and coronets. She herself quarrelled with the Lord Chamberlain for preserving his usual neutrality on this occasion, and she spoke of Lord Delaware, who was one of the chief managers against Handel, "with as much spleen as if he had been at the head of the Dutch faction who opposed the making her husband Stadtholder." It seems needless to say that George himself had no artistic appreciation of Handel. He subscribed one thousand a year to enable Handel to fight his battle, but he talked over the matter with unenthusiastic prosaic common sense. He said he "did not think setting one's self at the head of a faction of fiddlers a very honourable occupation for people of quality, or the ruin of one poor fellow so generous or so good-natured a scheme as to do much honour to the undertakers, whether they succeeded in it or not; but, the better they succeeded in it, the more he thought they would have reason to be ashamed of it." There were some gleams of manhood



shining through George still, and he could appreciate fair play, although he could not quite appreciate Handel. For the ruin of one poor fellow! The poor fellow was Handel. The faction of fiddlers that could ruin that poor fellow had not been found in the world, even if we were to include Nero himself among the number. One poor fellow! We wonder how many sovereigns living in George's time the world could have spared without a pang of regret if by the sacrifice it could secure for men's ennobling delight the immortal music of Handel.

On April 29, 1736, an event of importance took place in the House of Commons. The event was a maiden speech; the speech was the opening of a great career. The orator was a young man, only in his twenty-eighth year, who had just been elected for the borough of Old Sarum. The new member was a young officer of dragoons, and his name was William Pitt. Pitt attached himself at once to the fortunes of the Patriot or country party, and was very soon regarded as the most promising of Pulteney's young recruits. His maiden speech was spoken of and written of by his friends as a splendid success, as worthy of the greatest orator of any age. Probably the stately presence, the magnificent voice, and the superb declamation of the young orator may account for much of the effect which his first effort created, for in the report of the speech, such as it has come down to us, there is little to justify so much enthusiasm. But that the maiden speech was a signal success is beyond all doubt. A study of the history of the House of Commons will, however, make it clear that there is little guarantee, little omen even, for the future success of a speaker in the welcome given to his maiden speech. Over and over again has some new member delighted and thrilled the House of Commons by his maiden speech, and never delighted it or thrilled it any more. Over and over again has a new member failed in his maiden speech, failed utterly and ludicrously, and turned out afterwards to be one of the greatest debaters in Parliament. Over and over again has a man delivered his maiden speech without creating the slightest impression of any kind, good or bad, so that when he sits down it is, as Mr. Disraeli put it, hardly certain

whether he has lost his Parliamentary virginity or not; and a few years later on the same man has the whole House trembling with anxiety and expectation when he rises to take part in a great debate. On the whole it is probable that the chances of the future are rather in favour of the man who fails in his maiden speech. At all events there is as little reason to assume that a man is about to be a success in the House of Commons because he has made a successful maiden speech as there would be to assume that a man is to be a great poet because he has written a college prize poem. The friends of young William Pitt, however, were well justified in their expectations; and the magic of presence, voice, and action, which led to an exaggerated estimate of the merits of the speech, threw the same charm over the whole of Pitt's great career as an orator in the House of Commons.

Pitt came of a good family. His grandfather was the Governor of Madras to whom Mary Wortley Montagu more than once alludes: the "Governor Pitt" who was more famous in his diamonds than in himself, and whose most famous brilliant, the Pitt diamond, was bought by the Regent Duke of Orleans to adorn the crown of France. William Pitt was a younger son, and was but poorly provided for. A cornet's commission was obtained for him. The family had the ownership of some Parliamentary boroughs, according to the fashion of those days and of days much later still. At the general election of 1734 William Pitt's elder brother Thomas was elected for two constituencies, Okehampton and Old Sarum. When Parliament met, and the double return was made known to it, Thomas Pitt decided on taking his seat for Okehampton, and William Pitt was elected to serve in Parliament for Old Sarum. He soon began to be conspicuous among the young men—the "boy brigade," who cheered and supported Pulteney. William Pitt was from almost his childhood tortured with hereditary gout, but he had fine animal spirits for all that, and he appears to have felt from the first a genuine delight in the vivid struggles of the House of Commons. He began to outdo Pulteney in the vehemence and extravagance of his attacks on the

policy and the personal character of the Ministers. His principle apparently was that whatever Walpole did must *ipso facto* be wrong, and not merely wrong, but even base and criminal. Walpole was never very scrupulous about inflicting an injury on an enemy, especially if the enemy was likely to be formidable. He deprived William Pitt of his commission in the army. Thereupon Pitt was made Groom of the Bedchamber to the Prince of Wales. When the address was presented to the King on the occasion of the Prince's marriage with the Princess of Saxe-Gotha, it was Pulteney, leader of the Opposition, and not Walpole, the head of the Government, who moved its adoption. It was in this debate that William Pitt delivered that maiden speech from which so much was expected, and which was followed by so many great orations and such a commanding career. As yet, however, William Pitt is only the enthusiastic young follower of Pulteney, whom men compare with, or prefer to, other enthusiastic young followers of Pulteney. Even those who most loudly cried up his maiden speech could have had little expectation of what the maturity of that career was to bring.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### THE PORTEOUS RIOTS

A GOOD deal of disturbance and tumult was going on in various parts of the provinces. Some of our readers have probably not forgotten the riots which took place in Wales during the early part of the present reign, in consequence of the objection to the increase of turnpike gates and tolls, and in which the rioters took the name of "Rebecca and her daughters." Riots almost precisely similar in origin and character, but much more extensive and serious, were going on in the western counties during the earlier years of George the Second's reign. The rioting began as early as 1730, and kept breaking out here and there for some years. The rioters assembled in various places, in gangs



of about a hundred. Like "Rebecca and her daughters," they were usually dressed in women's clothes; they had their faces blackened; they were armed with guns and swords; and carried axes with which to hew down the obnoxious turnpike gates. The county magistrates, with the force at their disposal, were unable at one time to make any head against the rioters. The turnpike gates were undoubtedly a serious grievance, and at that time there was hardly any idea of dealing with a grievance but by the simple process of imprisoning, suppressing, or punishing those who protested too loudly against it.

The Gin riots were another serious disturbance to social order. Gin-drinking had grown to such a height amongst the middle classes in cities that reformers of all kinds took alarm at it. A Bill was brought into Parliament by Sir Joseph Jekyll, the Master of the Rolls, in 1736, for the purpose of prohibiting the sale of gin, or at least laying so heavy a duty on it as to put it altogether out of the reach of the poor, and absolutely prohibiting its sale in small quantities. The Bill was not a ministerial measure, and indeed Walpole seems to have given it but a cool and half-hearted approval, and the Patriots vehemently opposed it as an unconstitutional interference with individual habits and individual rights. The Bill, however, passed through Parliament, and was to come into operation on the 29th of the following September. At first it appears to have created but little popular excitement; but as the time drew near when the Act was to come into operation, and the poorer classes saw themselves face to face with the hour that was to cut them off from their favourite drink, a sudden discontent flashed out in the form of wide-spread riot. Only the most energetic action on the part of the authorities prevented the discontent from breaking into wholesale disturbance.

It does not seem as if the Gin Act did much for the cause of sobriety. Public opinion among the populace was too decidedly against it to allow of its being made a reality. Gin was every day sold under various names, and, indeed, it was publicly sold in many shops under its own name. The Gin Act called into existence an odious crew

of common informers who used to entrap people into the selling and drinking of gin in order to obtain their share of the penalty, or, perhaps, in some cases to satisfy a personal spleen. The mob hated the common informers as bitterly as a well-dressed crowd at a race-course in our own time hates a "welsher." When the informer was got hold of by his enemies, he was usually treated very much after the fashion in which the welsher is handled to-day.

It would be needless to say that the Gin Act and the agitation concerning it called also into existence a whole literature of pamphlets, ballads, libels, and lampoons. The agitation ran its course during some two years, more than once threatened to involve the country in serious disturbance, and died out at last when the legislation which had caused so much tumult was quietly allowed to become a dead letter.

Suddenly Edinburgh became the theatre of a series of dramatic events which made her, for the moment, the centre of interest to the political world. It is, perhaps, a sufficient proof of the delicate condition of the relations between the two countries that the arrest of two smugglers came within measurable distance of awaking civil war. These two smugglers, Wilson and Robertson, being under sentence of death, made, while in church under armed escort, a desperate effort to escape. Wilson, a man of great strength, holding two soldiers with his hands, and a third with his teeth, gave Robertson the chance, which he gladly seized, of plunging into the crowd of the dispersing congregation, and vanishing into space.

The Edinburgh magistrates, alarmed at the escape, offended by the display of popular sympathy with the escaped smuggler, and fearing, not, as it was said, without good cause, that an attempt would be made to rescue the single-minded and not unheroic Wilson, resolved to take all possible precautions to insure the carrying out of the sentence of the law. To do this the more effectively they ordered out nearly the whole of their own city guard under the command of Captain Porteous, and in doing so made one of the greatest mistakes recorded in their annals.

Captain John Porteous was in his way and within his

sphere a remarkable man. He belonged to that large crew of daring, resolute, and unscrupulous adventurers who, under happy conditions, become famous free companions, are great in guerilla wars, make excellent explorers, and even found colonies and lay the foundations of states, but who, under less auspicious stars, are only a terror to the peaceable and a discouragement to the law-abiding. To the romancist, to the dramatist, the character of such a man as John Porteous is intensely attractive; even in the graver ways of history he claims the attention imperatively, and stands forward with a decisive distinctness that lends to him an importance beyond his deserts. The life of Porteous had been from the beginning daring, desperate, and reckless. He was the son of a very respectable Edinburgh citizen, who was also a very respectable tailor, and whose harmless ambition it was to make the wild slip of his blood a respectable tailor in his turn. Never was the saying "Like father, like son" more astonishingly belied. Young John Porteous would have nothing to do with the tailor's trade. He was dissipated, he was devil-may-care; there was nothing better to be done with him than to ship him abroad into the military service of some foreign State, the facile resource in those days for getting rid of the turbulent and the troublesome. John Porteous went into foreign service; he entered the corps known as the Scotch-Dutch, in the pay of the States of Holland, and plied the trade of arms.

Time went on, and in its course it brought John Porteous back to Edinburgh. Here his military training served the city in good stead during the Jacobite rising of 1715. He disciplined the city guard and got his commission as its captain. But, if wanderings and foreign service had turned the tailor's son into a stout soldier, they had in no degree mended his morality or bettered his reputation. Edinburgh citizenship has always been commended for keeping a strict eye to the respectabilities, and the standard of public and private decorum was held puritanically high in the middle of the last century; but even in the most loose-lived of European cities, even in the frankest freedom of barrack or of camp, John Porteous, if his reputation did



not belie him, might have been expected to hold his own among the profligate and the brutal. It seems to be uncertain whether he was the more remarkable for his savage temper or for the dissolute disorder of his life. Naturally enough, perhaps in obedience to that law of contrast which seems so often to preside over the destinies of such men, his appearance did not accord with his nature. We read that he was of somewhat portly habit, by no means tall; that his face was rather benign than otherwise, and that his eyes suggested a sleepy mildness. Such as he was, he had lived a queer, wild life, but its queerest and its wildest scenes were now to come in swift succession before the end.

The city guard, of which Porteous was the commander, were scarcely more popular than their chief. Ferguson, the luckless tavern-haunting poet, the François Villon of Edinburgh, the singer whose genius some critics believe to be somewhat unfairly overshadowed by the greater fame of Burns, has branded them to succeeding generations as "black banditti." They were some 120 in number; they were composed of veteran soldiers, chiefly Highlanders; they were considered by such of the Edinburgh population as often came into conflict with them to be especially ferocious in their fashion of preserving civic order. Captain John Porteous seems to have found them men after his own heart, to have been very proud of them, and to have considered that they and he together were equal to coping with any emergency that a disturbed Edinburgh might present. He was therefore deeply affronted when the magistrates, after according to him and his men the duty of guarding the scaffold on which Wilson was to die, considered it necessary for the further preservation of peace and the overawing of any possible attempt at rescue to order a regiment of Welsh fusiliers to be drawn up in the principal street of the city. Wrath at the escape of Robertson, and indignation at the slight which he conceived to be put upon him and his men, acting upon his old hatred for his enemies, the Edinburgh mob, seems to have whipped the fierce temper of Porteous into wholly ungovernable fury. The execution took place under peculiarly painful

conditions. Porteous insisted on inflicting needless torture upon the unhappy Wilson by forcing upon his wrists a pair of handcuffs that were much too small for the purpose. When Wilson remonstrated, and urged that the pain distracted his thoughts from those spiritual reflections which were now so peremptory, Porteous is said to have replied with wanton ruffianism that such reflections would matter very little, since Wilson would so soon be dead. The prisoner is reported to have answered with a kind of prophetic dignity that his tormentor did not know how soon he might in his turn have to ask for himself the mercy which he now refused to a fellow-being. With these words, almost the latest on his lips, the smuggler went to his death and met it with a decent courage.

While the execution took place no signs were shown on the part of the great crowd that had assembled of any desire to rescue the prisoner. But the sentence had hardly been carried out when the temper of the mob appeared to change. Stones were thrown, angry cries were raised, and the mob, as if animated by a common purpose, began to press around the scaffold. One man leaped upon the gibbet and cut the rope by which the body was suspended; others gathered round as if to carry off the body. Then it is asserted that Porteous completely lost his head. The passion that had been swaying him all day entirely overmastered him. He is said to have snatched a musket from the hands of the soldier nearest to him, to have yelled to his men to fire, and to have shown the example by pointing his own piece and shooting one of the crowd dead.

Whether Porteous gave the order or not, it is certain that the attack upon the scaffold was followed by a loose fire from the guard which killed some six or seven persons and wounded many others. Then Porteous made an attempt to withdraw his men, and as they were moving up the High Street the now infuriated mob again attacked, and again the guards fired upon the people, and again men were killed and wounded. Thus, fighting his way, Porteous got his men to their guard-house.

The popular indignation was so great that the Edinburgh

authorities put Porteous upon his trial. Porteous defended himself vigorously, denied that he had ever given an order to fire, denied that he had ever fired his piece, proved that he had exhibited his piece to the magistrates immediately after the occurrence unused and still loaded. This defence was met by the counter-assertion that the weapon Porteous had used was not his own, but one seized from the hands of a soldier. A large number of persons gave evidence that they heard Porteous give the order to fire, that they saw him level and discharge the piece he had seized, and that they saw his victim fall. After a lengthy trial Porteous was found guilty and sentenced to death.

The sentence was received with almost universal approval in Edinburgh, but with very different feelings in London. The Queen, who was acting as regent in the absence of George II., felt especially strongly upon the subject. Lamentable as the violence of Captain Porteous had been, it was still urged that he had acted in obedience to a sense of duty. It was feared, too, that the disregard of authority shown by the lower population of Edinburgh would be gravely and dangerously intensified if so signal an example were to be made of an officer whose offence was only committed under conditions of grave provocation and in the face of an outbreak which might well appear to resemble riot. The Government in London came to the conclusion that it would not do to hang John Porteous, and a message was sent by the Duke of Newcastle notifying her Majesty's pleasure that Porteous should have a reprieve for a period of six weeks—a preliminary step to the consequent commutation of the death sentence.

But, if the Government in London proposed to reprieve Porteous, the wild democracy of Edinburgh were not willing to lose their vengeance so lightly. The deaths caused by the discharge of the pieces of Porteous's men had aroused the most passionate resentment in Edinburgh. Men of all classes, those directly affected by the deaths of friends and relatives, and those who looked upon the quarrel from an attitude of unconcerned justice, alike agreed in regarding Porteous's sentence as righteous and deserved. Now, alike, they agreed in resenting the inter-



ference of the Queen, and the apparently inevitable escape of Porteous from the consequences of his crime.

What followed fills one of the most dramatic of all the many dramatic pages in the history of Edinburgh town. John Porteous was imprisoned in the Tolbooth, in the very thick of the city. Some of his friends, stirred by fears which if vague were not imaginary, urged him to petition to the authorities to be removed to the Castle, perched safe aloft upon its rock. But Porteous, filled with a false security, and rejoicing in the reprieve that had arrived from London, took no heed of the warnings. Perhaps, like the Duke of Guise on something of a like occasion, he would, if warned that there was any thought of taking his life, have answered, secure in the sanctity of the old Tolbooth, in the historic words, "They would not dare." Porteous remained in the old Tolbooth; he gave an entertainment in honour of his reprieve to certain privileged friends; he was actually at supper, with the wine going round and round, and his apartment noisy with talk and laughter, when the gaoler entered the room with a pale face and a terrible tale. Half Edinburgh was outside the Tolbooth, armed and furious, their one demand for the person of Porteous, their one cry for his life.

The tale was strange enough to seem incredible even to minds more sober than those of Porteous and his companions, but it was perfectly true. Edinburgh had risen in the most mysterious way. From all parts of the town bands of men had come together; the guard-house of the city guard had been seized upon, the guards disarmed, and their weapons distributed among the conspirators. In a very short space of time Edinburgh was in the hands of an armed and determined mob; the magistrates, who attempted to enforce their authority, were powerless, and the crowd, with a unanimity which showed how well their plans had been preconcerted, directed all their energies to effecting an entrance into the Tolbooth. This proved at first exceedingly difficult. The great gate seemed to defy the force of all the sledge-hammer strokes that could be rained against it, and its warders were obstinate alike to the demands and the threats of the besiegers. But some one

in the ranks of the besiegers suggested fire, and through fire the Tolbooth fell. Faggots were piled outside the great gate and lighted, and the bonfire was assiduously fed until at last the great gate was consumed and the rioters rushed to their purpose over the glowing embers and through the flying sparks.

They found Porteous in his apartment, deserted by his companions, dizzy with the fumes of wines, and helpless with the horror of the doom that menaced him. He might perhaps have escaped when the first alarm was sounded, but, as he lost his head before through passion, so he seems to have lost it now through dismay. The poor wretch had indeed at the last moment, when it was too late, sought refuge in the chimney of his room; his flight was stopped by a grating a little way up; to this grating he clung, and from this grating he was plucked away by his assailants. In a few moments he was carried into the open air, was borne, the bewildered, despairing, struggling centre of all that armed and merciless mass, swiftly towards the Netherbow. In the midst of the blazing torches, the Lochaber axes, the guns and naked swords, that hemmed him in, the helpless, hopeless victim was swept along. A rope was readily found, but a gibbet was not forthcoming; a dyer's pole served the need. Within a little while after the forcing of the Tolbooth gate Porteous was hanged and dead, and his wild judges were striking at his lifeless body with their weapons. It is said, and we may well believe it, that Porteous died, when he found that he had to die, bravely enough, as became a soldier. In that wild, mad life of his he had faced many perils, and if he pleaded for his life with his self-ordained executioners while there was any chance that pleading might prevail, it is likely enough that he accepted the inevitable with composure. Wilson was avenged; the victims of the fusillade of the city guard had been atoned for by blood, and Edinburgh had asserted with a ferocity all her own that England's will was not her will, and England's law not her law.

The peculiar characteristics of the crowd that battered down the Tolbooth gate and carried off Porteous to his

death in the Grassmarket were its orderliness, its singleness of purpose, and the curious "respectability," if such a term may be employed, of its composition. Its singleness of purpose and its orderliness were alike exemplified by the way in which it went about its grim business and by the absolute absence of all riot or pillage of any kind, or indeed of any sort of violence beyond that essential to the carrying out of its intent. No peaceable persons were molested; no buildings other than the Tolbooth were broken into; the very rope which hanged the unhappy Porteous was immediately and amply paid for. No one except the victim of the conspiracy received harm at the hands of the mob. The "respectability" of a large proportion of the mob and of those controlling its actions was afterwards vouched for in many ways. Ladies told tales of their carriages being stopped by disguised men of courteous bearing and marked politeness, who with the most amiable apologies turned their horses' heads from the scene of action. It was afterwards reported and commonly believed that the Edinburgh authorities knew more about the purpose of the self-appointed executioners than was consonant with a due regard for law and order. In fact, if the passions of the mob were aroused they were undoubtedly organised, directed, and held in check by those who knew well how to command, and to give to an illegal act the gravity and decorum of legality.

News travelled slowly in those days. There were no telegrams, no special editions, no newspapers, to tell the Londoner in the morning of the grim deed that had been done in Edinburgh overnight. But when the news did come it certainly startled London, and it raised up a perfect passion of rage, a *hysterica passio*, in the heart and brain of one person. That person was the Queen, who had herself specially ordered the reprieve of the condemned man. Queen Caroline's reason seemed for the moment to be well-nigh unhinged by her anger at the news. She uttered the wildest threats, and talked vehemently of inflicting all manner of impossible punishment upon Edinburgh for the offences of its mob.

Fortunately for the maintenance of peace between the



two countries, the question of the justice or the injustice of Porteous's fate was not to be settled by the caprice of an irritated woman. In obedience, however, to the Queen's wishes, the Government introduced into the House of Lords, in April 1737, a Bill the terms of which proposed to disable the Lord Provost of Edinburgh, Alexander Wilson, "from taking, holding, or enjoying any office or place of magistracy in the city of Edinburgh, or elsewhere in Great Britain, and for imprisoning the said Alexander Wilson, and for abolishing the guard kept up in the said city, commonly called the Town Guard, and for taking away the gates of the Netherbow port of the said city, and keeping open the same." The Bill was the occasion of long and bitter debates, in which Lord Carteret made himself the most conspicuous advocate of the Government measure, and the Duke of Argyll acted as the chief champion of the Scotch peers, who resolutely opposed it. The debate was curious and instructive, in serving to show the extreme delicacy of the relations between England and Scotland, and the difficulties presented by the differences between the Scotch law and the English law. Porteous was tried and condemned by Scotch law, and many if not most of the English advocates of the Bill seemed to find it hard to get it into their heads that a trial which was not conducted in accordance with the principles of English legislation could possibly be a fair or a just trial.

If the Bill was calculated to irritate the susceptibilities of the Scotch peers, there were attendant circumstances still more irritating. The three Scotch judges were summoned from Scotland to answer certain legal questions connected with the debate. On their arrival a fresh debate sprang up on the question whether they should be examined "at the Bar, at the Table, or upon the Woolsacks." The Scotch peers considered it disrespectful to their judges to be examined at the Bar of the House of Lords, and urged some of their arguments against it in terms of ominous warning. It is curious to find a speaker in this debate telling the Government that the strength of the legal union that existed between England and Scotland depended entirely upon the way in which the people of Scotland were treated

by the majority in the two Houses. If any encroachment be made, the speaker urged, on those articles which have been stipulated between the two countries, the legal union will be of little force; the Scotch people will be apt to ascribe to the present royal family all the ills they feel or imagine they feel; and if they should unanimously join in a contrary interest they would be supported by a powerful party in England as well as by a powerful party beyond the seas. For such reasons the speaker urged that any insult, or seeming insult, to the people of Scotland was especially to be avoided, and any disrespect to the Scotch judges would be looked upon by the whole nation as a violation of the Articles of Union and an indignity to the Scottish people.

The use of such words in the House of Lords within two-and-twenty years of the rising of 1715 ought to have been found most significant. No one who was present and who heard those words could guess indeed that within little more than eight years Scotland and England would witness a rising yet more formidable than that of James Stuart, a rising which would put for a moment in serious peril the Hanoverian hold of the throne. But they might well have been accepted as of the gravest import by those who voted for the attendance of the Scotch judges at the Bar of the House of Lords, and who carried their point by a majority of twelve.

The question of the judges being settled, the debate on the Bill went on, and the measure was read a third time on Wednesday, May 11, and passed by a majority of fifty-four to twenty-two. On the following Monday, May 16, the Bill was sent down to the House of Commons, where it occasioned debates even warmer than the debates in the Upper House. The Scotch opposition was more successful in the Commons than it had been in the Lords. So strenuously was the measure opposed that at one time it seemed likely to be lost altogether, and was only saved from extinction by a casting vote. When at last it was read a third time, on June 13, it was a very different measure, in name and in form, from the Bill which had come down from the Peers a month earlier. The proposal

to abolish the Edinburgh city guard and to destroy the gate of the Netherbow port disappeared from the Bill, and the proposed measures of punishment finally resolved themselves into the infliction of a fine of two thousand pounds upon the city of Edinburgh, and the declaration that the Provost, Alexander Wilson, was incapable of holding office. Such was the pacific conclusion of a controversy that at one time seemed likely to put a dangerous strain upon the amicable relations between the two countries. It may indeed be shrewdly suspected that the memory of the Porteous mob, and of the part which the Hanoverian Queen and the Whig Government played in connection with it, had no inconsiderable share in fanning the embers of Jacobite enthusiasm in Scotland, in swelling the ranks of the sympathisers with King James and Prince Charles over the water, and in precipitating the insurrectionary storm which was to make memorable the name of the Forty-Five. Perhaps, however, to the world at large the most momentous result of that wild and stormy episode is to be found in the enchanting fiction which has illuminated, with the genius of Walter Scott, the stirring scenes of the Porteous riots, and has lent an air of heroic dignity and beauty to the obscure smuggler, George Robertson. It is the happy privilege of the true romancist to find history his handmaid, and to make obscure events immortal, whether they be the scuffles of Greeks and barbarians outside a small town in Asia Minor, or the lynching of a dissolute adventurer by an Edinburgh mob in the Grassmarket.

## CHAPTER XXV

### FAMILY JARS

“How is the wind now for the King?” “Like the nation—against him.” Such was the question put, and such the answer promptly given, by two persons meeting in a London street during certain stormy days of December 1736. The King had been on a visit to his loved Han-



over. When the royal yachts were returning, some fierce tempests sprang up and raged along both coasts; and the King's vessel was forced to return to Helvoetsluys, in Holland, from which she had sailed. She had parted company with some of the other vessels. The storms continued to rage, and the King, who had been most reluctant to leave Hanover, was wild with impatience to get away from Helvoetsluys. Having had to take leave of Madame Walmoden, he was now anxious to get back to the Queen. He sailed for Helvoetsluys while the tempest was still not wholly allayed, and another tempest seemed likely to spring up. News travelled slowly in those times, and there were successive intervals of several days, during which the English court and the English public did not know whether George was safe in a port, or was drifting on a wreck, or was lying at the bottom of the sea.

That was a trying time for the Queen and those who stood by her. George the Second was just then very unpopular in London, and indeed all over England. "The King's danger," Lord Hervey says, "did not in the least soften the minds of the people towards him; a thousand impertinent and treasonable reflections were thrown out against him every day publicly in the streets—such as wishing him at the bottom of the sea; that he had been drowned instead of some of the poor sailors that had been washed off the decks—and many other affectionate douceurs in the same style." A man went into an alehouse where several soldiers were drinking; he addressed them as "brave English boys," and called on them to drink "damnation to your master." The man went on to argue that there was no reason why the English people should not hate the King, and that the King had gone to Hanover only to spend the money of England there, and to bring back his Hanoverian mistress. There is not much in this of any particular importance; but there is significance in what followed. The man was arrested, and the sergeant who was with the soldiers when the invitation to drink was given went to Sir Robert Walpole to tell him what had happened. Sir Robert thanked the sergeant and rewarded him, but enjoined him to leave out of the affidavit he

would have to make any allusion to the English money and the Hanoverian mistress. There was quite enough in the mere invitation to drink the disloyal toast, Sir Robert said, to secure the offender's punishment; but the Prime Minister was decidedly of opinion that the less said just then in public about the spending of English money and the endowment of Hanoverian women, the better for peace and quietness.

The Queen and Sir Robert and Lord Hervey were in constant consultation. They would not show in public the fear which all alike entertained. The Queen went to chapel, and passed her evenings with her circle just as usual; but she was in the uttermost alarm and the deepest distress. Any hour might bring the news that the King was drowned; and who could tell what might not happen in England then? Of course in the natural order of things the Prince of Wales would succeed to the throne; and what would become of the Queen and Walpole and Hervey then? Hervey, indeed, tried to reassure the Queen, and to persuade her that her son would acknowledge her influence and be led by it; but Caroline could not be prevailed upon to indulge in such a hope even for a moment. To add to her troubles, her daughter, the Princess of Orange, was lying in a most dangerous condition at the Hague—her confinement had taken place; she had suffered terribly; and, to save her life, it had been found necessary to sacrifice the unborn child, a daughter. Every hour that passed without bringing news of the King seemed to increase the chance of the news when it came proving the worst. Such was the moment when the Prince of Wales made himself conspicuous by several bids for popularity. He gave a dinner to the Lord Mayor and aldermen of the City of London on the occasion of their presenting him with the freedom of the City. The Queen, who, for all her philosophical scepticism and her emancipated mind, had many lingering superstitions in her, saw an evil omen in the fact that the only two Princes of Wales who before Frederick had been presented with the freedom of the City were Charles the First and James the Second. The Prince was reported to the Queen to have made several speeches

at the dinner which were certain to ingratiate him in popular favour. "My God!" she exclaimed, "popularity always makes me sick; but Fritz's popularity makes me vomit." People told her that the Prince and those around him talked of the King's being cast away "with the same *sang froid* as you would talk of a coach being overturned." She said she had been told that Frederick strutted about as if he were already King. But she added, "He is such an ass that one cannot tell what he thinks; and yet he is not so great a fool as you take him for, neither." The Princess Caroline vowed that, if the worst were to prove true, she would run out of the house *au grand galop*. Walpole described the Prince to Hervey as "a poor, weak, irresolute, false, lying, dishonest, contemptible wretch," and asked, "What is to become of this divided family and this divided country?" It is something of a relief to find that there was in one mind at least a thought of what might happen to the country.

We have to take all these pictures of Frederick on trust—on the faith of the father who loathed him, of the mother who detested and despised him, of the brothers and sisters who shrank away from him, of the Minister who could not find words enough to express his hatred and contempt for him. Of course the mere fact that father and mother, brothers and sisters, felt thus towards the Prince is terrible testimony against him. But there does not seem much in his conduct, at least in his public conduct, during this crisis, which might not bear a favourable interpretation. He might have given his dinners, as the Queen held her public drawing-rooms, for the purpose of preventing the spread of an alarm. No doubt the entertainment to the Lord Mayor and aldermen had been long arranged; and the Prince may have thought it would be unwise to put it off at such a moment. Every report was believed against him. A fire broke out at the Temple, and the Prince went down and stayed all night, giving directions and taking the control of the work for the putting out of the flames. His exertions undoubtedly helped to save the Temple from destruction; and he became for the time a hero with the populace. It was reported to Caroline that either the



Prince himself or some of his friends went about afterwards saying that the crowd on the night of the fire kept crying out, "Crown him ! crown him !"

So far as the alarm of the Queen and Walpole had to do with the state of the country, it does not seem that there was any solid ground. What would have happened if the "bloat King" had been tossed ashore a corpse on the coast of England or the coast of Holland? So far as the public affairs of England are concerned, nothing in particular would have happened, we think. George would have been buried in right royal fashion ; there would have been an immense concourse of sightseers to stare at the royal obsequies ; and Frederick would have been proclaimed, and the people would have taken little notice of the fact. What could it have mattered to the English people whether George the Second or his eldest son was on the throne? No doubt Frederick was generally distrusted and disliked wherever he was known ; but, then, George the Second was ever so much more widely known, and therefore was ever so much more distrusted and disliked. The chances of a successful Jacobite rising would not have been affected in any way by the fact that it was this Hanoverian Prince and not that who was sitting on the throne of England. It would be hardly possible to find a more utterly unkingly and ignoble Sovereign than George the Second ; it is hardly possible that his son could have turned out any worse ; and there was, at all events, the possibility that he might turn out better. Outside London and Richmond very few people cared in the least which of the Hanoverians wore the crown. Those who were loyal to the reigning family were honestly loyal on the principle that it was better for the country to have a Hanoverian Sovereign than a Stuart. Many of those who in their feelings were still devoted to the Stuart tradition did not think it would be worth while plunging the country into a civil war for the almost hopeless chance of a revolution. England was beginning to see that, with all the corruption of Parliament and the constituencies under Walpole's Administration, there was yet a very much better presentation of constitutional government than they had ever seen before. The arbitrary power of

the Sovereign had practically ceased to affect anybody outside the circles of the Ministry and the Court. The law tribunals sat and judged men impartially according to their lights, and person and property were at least secure against the high-handed intrusion of the sovereign power. The old-fashioned chivalric, picturesque loyalty was gone; not merely because royalty itself had ceased to be chivalric and picturesque, but because men had, after so many experiments and changes, come to regard the monarchy as a merely practical and prosaic institution, to be rated according to its working merits. The majority in England at the time when George was tossing about the North Sea, or waiting impatiently at Helvoetsluys, had come to the conclusion that on the whole the monarchy worked better under the Hanoverians than it had done under the Stuarts, and was more satisfactory than the protectorate of Cromwell. Therefore, we do not believe there was the slightest probability that the loss of George the Second would have brought any political trouble on the State. One can imagine objections made even by very moderate and reasonable Englishmen to each and all of the Hanoverian kings; but we find it hard to imagine how any reasonable Englishman, who had quietly put up with George the Second, should be at any pains to resist the accession of George the Second's eldest son.

But the truth is that, although in her many consultations with Walpole and with Hervey the Queen did sometimes let drop a word or two about the condition of the country and the danger to the State, she was not thinking much about the state of the country. She was thinking honestly about herself and those who were around her, and whom she loved and wished to see maintained in comfort and in dignity. Her conviction was that if her son Frederick came to the throne she and her other children would be forced to go into an obscure life in Somerset House, the old palace which had been assigned to her in her jointure, and that they would even in that obscurity have to depend very much on the charity of the new King. This was the view Walpole took of the prospect. He thought those most in peril, those most to be pitied, were the Queen and

the Duke, her son, and the Princesses. "I do not know," said Walpole to Hervey, "any people in the world so much to be pitied as that gay young company with which you and I stand every day in the drawing-room, at that door from which we this moment came, bred up in state, in affluence, caressed and courted, and to go at once from that into dependence on a brother who loves them not, and whose extravagance and covetousness will make him grudge every guinea they spend, as it must come from out of a purse not sufficient to defray the expenses of his own vices."

Walpole, to do him justice, did think of the country. For all his rough, coarse, selfish ways, Walpole was an English patriot. He thought of the country, but he saw no danger to national interests in the change from George to Frederick. He saw indeed a great prospect of miserable mismanagement, blundering, and confusion in the Government. He foresaw the reliance of the coming King on the most worthless favourites. He foresaw more corruption and of a worse kind, and more maladministration, than there had been before at any time since the accession of George the First. He feared that it might not be possible for him to remain at the head of affairs when Frederick should have come to reign. But he does not appear to have had any dread of any immediate cataclysm or even disturbance. The troubles Walpole looked for were troubles which might indeed make government difficult, disturb the House of Commons, and bring discomfort of the bitterest kind into court circles, but which would be hardly heard of in the great provincial towns, and not heard of at all in the country—at least not heard of outside the park railings of the great country-houses.

Whatever the alarm, it was destined suddenly to pass away. While Caroline was already secretly putting her heart into mourning for her husband, the news was suddenly brought that George was safe and sound in Helvoetsluys. He had been compelled to return, and there he had to remain weather-bound. He wrote to the Queen a long, tender, and impassioned love-letter—like the letter of a youthful lover in whose heart the first feeling on an unexpected escape from death is the glad thought that he is to



look once again on the fair face of his sweetheart. George really had a gift for love-letter writing, the only literary gift which he seems to have possessed. It is impossible to read the letters written from Helvoetsluys without believing that they were written under the inspiration of genuine emotion. Their style might well raise over again that interesting subject of speculation—whether it is in the power of man to be in love with two or more women at the same time. King George was unquestionably in love with Madame Walmoden: while he was near her he could think of nothing else. He was in Hanover, feasting and dancing, always in Madame Walmoden's company, while his daughter was lying on what seemed at one time like to be her death-bed at the Hague. It is not a very far cry from Hanover to the Hague, but it never occurred to George to entertain the idea of leaving Madame Walmoden to go and pay a visit to his daughter. Out of Madame Walmoden's presence his thoughts appear to have flown at once back to his wife. To her he wrote, not in the mere language of conjugal affection and sympathy, but with the passionate raptures of young love itself. The Queen was immensely proud of this letter, although she took care to say that she believed she was not unreasonably proud of it. She showed it to Walpole and to Hervey, who both agreed that they had a most incomprehensible master. Walpole was a very shrewd and keen-sighted man, but he did not understand Queen Caroline or her feeling towards her husband. He had told Hervey more than once that he did not know whether the Queen hated more her son or her husband; and, indeed, he said there was good reason why she should hate the husband the more of the two, seeing that he had treated her so badly while she had been all devotion to him. The love of a woman is not always governed by a sense of gratefulness. There are women whose hearts are like the grape, and give out their best juices to him who tramples on them. If anything is certain in all the coarse and dreary story of that Court, it is that Queen Caroline adored her husband—that “she was too fond of her most filthy bargain.”

The danger in which George had been, and out of which

he had escaped, did not in any way soften the hearts of King and Prince, of father and son, towards each other. The Prince still occupied a suite of rooms in St. James's Palace, and the King and he met on public occasions, but they never spoke. The Queen was even more constant in her hatred to the Prince than the King himself. It does not seem possible to find out how this detestation of the son by the mother ever began to fill the Queen's heart. She was not an unloving mother; indeed, where her affection to the King did not stand in the way, she was fond and tender to nearly all her children. But towards her eldest son she seems to have felt something like a physical aversion. Then, again, the King was a dull, stupid, loutish man, over whose clouded faculties any absurd prejudice or dislike might have settled unquestioned; but Caroline was a bright, clever, keen-witted woman, who asked herself and others why this or that should be. She must have many times questioned her own heart and reasoned with herself before she allowed it to be filled for ever with hatred to her son. Lord Hervey, who had a true regard for her, and in whom she trusted as much as she trusted any human being, does not appear to have ever fully understood the cause of the Queen's feelings towards the Prince; nor does he appear to have shared her utter distrust and dislike of him. As far as one can judge, the Prince appears to have been fickle, inconsiderate, and flighty rather than deliberately bad. He sometimes did things which made him seem like a madman. Such a person would not be charmed into a healthier condition of mind and temper by the knowledge daily thrust upon him that his own father and mother, and his own sister, were the three persons who hated him most in the world. Of course, in this, as in other cases of a palace quarrel between a king and an eldest son, there was a bitter wrangle about money. The Prince demanded an allowance of one hundred thousand a year to be secured to him independently of his father's power to recall or reduce it. The King had hitherto only given him what Frederick called a beggarly allowance of fifty thousand a year, and even that had not been made over to the Prince unconditionally and for ever. The Prince argued that his father's civil list was

now much larger than that of George the First at the time when the Prince of Wales of that day, George the Second now, was allowed an income of one hundred thousand a year. The Princess of Wales had as yet received no jointure, and she and the Prince were thus kept, as Frederick's friends insisted, in the condition of mere pensioners and dependants upon the royal bounty. The Prince's friends were for the most part eager to stir him up to some open measure of hostility: especially the younger men of the party were doing their best to drive the Prince on. Pulteney, it must be said, was not for any such course of action, indeed was against it, and had given the Prince good advice; and Carteret was not for it. But Lord Chesterfield and several other peers, and Lyttelton and William Pitt in the House of Commons, were eager for the fray, and their counsels prevailed. To use an expression which became famous at a much later day, "the young man's head was on fire," and it soon became known to the King and Queen that the Prince had resolved to act upon a suggestion made by Bolingbroke two years before, and submit his claim to the decision of Parliament. More than that, when Walpole was consulted Walpole felt himself obliged to declare his belief, or at least his fear, that if the Prince should persist in making his claim he would find himself supported by a majority in the House of Commons. The story had reached the Queen in the first instance through Lord Hervey, and the manner of its reaching Lord Hervey is worth mentioning because it brings in for the first time a name destined to be famous during two succeeding generations. The Prince, having been persuaded to appeal to Parliament, at once began touting for support and for votes after the fashion of a candidate for a Parliamentary constituency. He sent the Duke of Marlborough to speak to Mr. Henry Fox, a young member of Parliament, and to ask Mr. Fox for his vote. Henry Fox was the younger of two brothers, both of whom were intimate friends of Lord Hervey. He had not been long in the House of Commons, having obtained a seat in 1735 as member for Hindon, in Wiltshire. He had come into Parliament in the same year with William Pitt, whose foremost political rival he was



soon destined to be. He was also destined to be the father of the greatest rival of his opponent's son. English public life was to see a Pitt and a Fox opposed to each other at the head of rival parties in one generation, and a far greater Fox and a not inferior Pitt standing in just the same attitude of rivalry in the generation that succeeded.

Henry Fox went at once to Lord Hervey and told him how he had been asked to support the Prince, and how he had answered that he should do as his brother did, whatever that might be. Lord Hervey at first was not inclined to attach much importance to the story. He said he had heard so often that the Prince was going to take up such a course of action and nothing had come of it so far, and he did not suppose anything would come of it this time. Fox, however, assured him that the attempt would now most certainly be made, and was surprised to find that the Ministers appeared to know nothing about it. He declared that he did not believe there was a man on the side of the Opposition who had not already been asked for his vote. Lord Hervey hurried to the Queen and told her the unpleasant news. Caroline sent for Walpole; and at last the story was told to the King himself. The Queen was urged by Lord Hervey to speak to her son privately, and endeavour to induce him not to declare open war upon his father. The Queen would not do anything of the kind. She declared that her speaking to her son would only make him more obstinate than ever, and that he was such a liar that it would not be safe for her to enter into any private conference with him. Other intercessors were found, but the Prince was unyielding; and George himself, as obstinate as his son, could not be induced at first by Walpole, or by any one else, to make any show of concession or compromise. The Princess Caroline kept saying ever so many times a day that she prayed her brother might drop down dead; that he was a nauseous beast, and she grudged him every hour he continued to exist. These sisterly expressions did not contribute much to any manner of settlement, and the Prince held on his course. The calculations of Frederick's friends gave him in advance a majority of forty in the House of Commons; and even the most

experienced calculators of votes on the King's side allowed to the Prince a majority of ten. Walpole began to think the crisis one of profound danger. He felt it only too likely that the fate of his Administration would depend on the division in the House of Commons.

Something must be done; something at least must be attempted. Walpole saw nothing for it but to endeavour to arrange a compromise. Parliament had opened on February 1, and the day appointed for the debate on this important question of the Prince's allowance was to be Tuesday, the 22nd of the month. On the Monday previous, Walpole made up his mind that if the King did not offer some fair show of compromise his party would be beaten when the question came to be put to the vote. His plan of arrangement was that the King should spontaneously send to the Prince an intimation that he was willing to settle a jointure at once on the Princess, with the added remark that this had already been under consideration—which indeed was true; not a very common occurrence in royal messages of that day—and that he was also prepared to settle fifty thousand a year on the Prince himself for ever and without condition. Walpole did not believe that the Prince would accept this offer of compromise. He knew very well that Frederick, full of arrogant confidence and obstinacy, and urged on by the zeal and passion of his friends, would be certain to refuse it. But Walpole was not thinking much about the impression which the offer would make on the Prince. The thought uppermost in his mind was of the impression it would make on the House of Commons. Unless some new impression could be made upon the House, the triumph of the Prince was absolutely certain; and Walpole felt sure that if any step could now alter the condition of things in the House of Commons it would be the publication of the fact that the King had spontaneously held out the olive branch; that he had offered a fair compromise, and that the Prince had refused it.

Walpole had much trouble to prevail upon the King to make any offer of compromise. Even Lord Hervey was strongly of opinion that the attempt would be a failure,

that the proffered concession would be wholly thrown away. Such a movement, he said, would neither put off the battle nor gain the King one single desertion from the ranks of the enemy, while to the King's own party it would seem something like a lowering of the flag. Walpole, however, persevered, and he carried his point. A deputation, headed by the new Lord Chancellor, Lord Hardwicke, who had succeeded to the Great Seal on the death of his famous rival, Lord Chancellor Talbot, was sent to wait on the Prince and submit to him the proposition of his father. The Prince answered rather ungraciously that the matter was entirely out of his hands now, and that therefore he could give no answer to the royal message. It must be gratifying to every patriotic soul to know that his Royal Highness accompanied this declaration with "many dutiful expressions" towards his father, and that he even went so far as to say he was sorry it was not in his power to do otherwise than he had done. The dutiful expressions did not by any means charm away the wrath either of the King or the Queen. The two stormed and raged against Frederick, and called him by many very hard names. Both were much disposed to storm against Walpole too, for the advice he had given, and for his pertinacity in forcing them on to a step which had brought nothing but humiliation. Walpole bore his position with a kind of patience which might be called either proud or stolid, according as one is pleased to look at it. With all his courage Walpole must have felt some qualms of uneasiness now and then, but if he did feel he certainly did not show them.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### A PERILOUS VICTORY

ON Tuesday, February 22, the debate took place in the House of Commons. It came on in the form of a motion for an address to the Sovereign, praying that he would make to the Prince of Wales an independent allowance of



one hundred thousand a year. The motion was proposed by Pulteney himself. Lord Hervey seems to be surprised that Pulteney, after having advised the Prince not to press on any such motion, should nevertheless, when the Prince did persevere, actually propose the motion himself. But such a course is common enough even in our own days, when statesmen make greater effort at political and personal consistency. A man often argues long and earnestly in the Cabinet or in the councils of the Opposition against some particular proposal, and then, when it is, in spite of his advice, made a party resolve, he goes to the House of Commons and speaks in its favour; nay, even, it may be, proposes it. Pulteney made a long and what would now be called an exhaustive speech. It was stuffed full of portentous erudition about the early history of the eldest sons of English Kings. The speech was said to have been delivered with much less than Pulteney's usual force and fire; and indeed, so far as one can judge by the accounts—they can hardly be called reports—preserved of it, one is obliged to regard it as rather a languid and academical dissertation. We start off with what Henry the Third did for his son, afterwards Edward the First, when that noble youth had reached the unripe age of fourteen. He granted to him the Duchy of Guienne; he put him in possession of the Earldom of Chester; he made him owner of the cities and towns of Bristol, Stamford, and Grantham, with several other castles and manors; he created him Prince of Wales, to which, lest it should be merely a barren title, he annexed all the conquered lands in Wales; and he created him Governor of Ireland. All this, to be sure, was mightily liberal on the part of Henry the Third, and a very handsome and right royal way of providing for his own family; but it might be supposed an argument rather to frighten than to encourage a modern English Parliament. But the orator went on to show what glorious deeds in arms were done by this highly endowed Prince, and the inferences which he appeared to wish his audience to draw were twofold: first, that Edward would never have done these glorious deeds if his father had not given him these magnificent allowances; and next, that if an equal, or anything

like an equal, liberality were shown to Frederick, Prince of Wales, it was extremely probable that he would rush into the field at the first opportunity and make a clean sweep of the foes of England.

We need not follow the orator through his account of what was done for Edward the Black Prince, and what Edward the Black Prince had done in consequence; and how Henry the Fifth had been able to conquer France because of his father's early liberality. The whole argument tended to impress upon the House of Commons the maxim that in a free country, above all others, it is absolutely necessary to have the heir-apparent of the Crown bred up in a state of grandeur and independence. Despite the high-flown sentiments and the grandiose historical illustrations in which the speaker indulged, there seems to the modern intelligence an inherent meanness, a savour of downright vulgarity, through the whole of it. If you give a prince only fifty thousand a year, you cannot expect anything of him. What can he know of grandeur of soul, of national honour, of constitutional rights, of political liberty? You cannot get these qualities in a prince unless you pay him at least a hundred thousand a year while his father is living. The argument would have told more logically if the English Parliament were going into the open market to buy the best prince they could get. There would be some show of reason then in arguing that the more we pay the better article we shall have. But it is hard indeed to understand how a prince who is to be worth nothing if you only give him fifty thousand a year will be another Black Prince or Henry the Fifth if you let him have the spending of fifty thousand a year more. Walpole led the opposition to the motion. Much of the argument on both sides was essentially sordid, but there was a good deal also which was keen, close, and clever, and which may have even now a sort of constitutional interest. The friends of the Prince knew they must have to meet the contention that Parliament had no right to interfere with the Sovereign's appropriation of the revenues allotted to him. They therefore contended, and, as it seems to us, with force and justice, that the Parliament

which made the grants had a perfect right to see that the grants were appropriated to the uses for which they were intended, to follow out the grants in the course of their application, and even to direct that they should be applied to entirely different purposes ; even, if need were, to resume them. It would naturally seem to follow from this assumption that Parliament had a right to call on the King to make the allowance to the Prince, but it would seem to follow also that the allowance ought not to be made independent and absolute. For, if the Prince of Wales had an allowance absolutely independent of the will of any one, he had something which Pulteney and his friends were contending, as it was their business just then to contend, that the English Parliament had never consented to give to the King. On the other hand, it was pointed out with much effect that there never had been any express regulation in England to provide that the Prince of Wales should be made independent of his father, and there was clear, good sense in the contempt with which Walpole treated the argument that the state of dependence upon his father in which the son of a great family usually lives must necessarily tend to the debasing of the son's mind and the diminishing of his intelligence, or that the dignity and grandeur even of a Prince of Wales could not be as well supported by a yearly allowance as by a perpetual and independent settlement. Some of the speakers on Walpole's side—indeed Walpole himself occasionally—strove to show their willingness to serve the Prince by utterances which must have caused the Prince to smile a grim sardonic smile if he had any existing sense of humour. Please do not imagine—this was the line of observation—that we think one hundred thousand a year too much for his Royal Highness. Oh dear, no ; nothing of the kind ; we do not think it would be half enough if only the nation had the money to give away. “Why,” exclaimed one gushing orator, “if we had the money the only course we could take would be to offer his Royal Highness whatever he pleased to accept, and even in that case we should have reason to fear lest his modesty might do an injury to his generosity by making him confine his demand within the



strictest bounds of bare necessity." "Were we," another member of the court party declared, "to measure the Prince's allowance by the Prince's merit, as we know no bounds to the latter, we could prescribe no bounds to the former." Therefore, as it was totally impossible that the treasury of any State could reward this extraordinary Prince according to his merit, the speakers on Walpole's side mildly pleaded that they had only to fall back on the cold and commonplace rules of ordinary economy, and try to find out what sum the nation could really afford to hand over.

The men who talked these revolting absurdities were saying among themselves an hour after that the Prince was an avaricious and greedy beast, and were openly proclaiming their pious wish that Providence would be graciously inclined to rid the world of him. Nothing strikes one as more painful and odious in the ways of that court and that Parliament than the language of sickening sycophancy which is used by all statesmen alike in public with regard to kings and princes for whom in private they could find no words of abuse too strong and coarse, no curse too profane. Never was an oriental despot the most vain and cruel addressed in language of more nauseous flattery by great Ministers and officers of State than were the early English Sovereigns of the House of Hanover. The filthy indecency which came so habitually from the lips of Walpole, of other statesmen, of the King—sometimes even of the Queen herself—hardly seems more ignoble, more demoralising, than the outpouring of a flattery as false as it was gross, a flattery that ought to have sickened alike the man who poured it out and the man whom it was poured over. Poor, stupid George seems to have been always taken in by it. Indeed, in his heavy mind there was no praise the voice of man could utter which could quite come up to his perfections. The quicker-witted Queen sometimes writhed under it.

Walpole, however, did not depend upon argument to carry his point. The stone up his sleeve, to use a somewhat homely expression, which he meant to fling at his enemy, was something quite different from any question of

Constitution or prescription or precedent; of the genius of the Black Prince, and the manner in which wild Hal, Falstaff's companion, had been endowed and allowanced into Henry, the victor of Agincourt. Walpole flung down, metaphorically speaking, on the table of the House the record of the interview between the Prince of Wales and the great peers who waited on him with the message of the King. The record set forth all that had happened: how the King had declared himself willing to provide at once a suitable jointure for the Princess of Wales; how he had shown that this had been under consideration, and explained in the simplest way the reason why the arrangement had been delayed; how his Majesty had voluntarily taken it on himself that the Prince should have fifty thousand a year absolutely independent of the Sovereign's future action, and over and above the revenues arising from the Duchy of Cornwall, "which his Majesty thinks a very competent allowance, considering his own numerous issue and the great expenses which do, and which necessarily must, attend an honourable provision for his whole Royal Family." And then the record gave the answer of the Prince of Wales and its peculiar conclusion: "Indeed, my lords, it is in other hands—I am sorry for it"; "or," as the record of the peers cautiously concluded, "to that effect."

The reading of this document had one effect, which was instantly evoked for it by Walpole. It brought the whole controversy down to the question whether the Prince's father or the Prince's friends ought to be the better authority as to the amount which the King could afford to give, and the amount which the Prince ought to be encouraged to demand. It shrank, in fact, into a mean discussion about the cost of provisions and the amounts of the land tax; the number of children George the Second had to maintain as compared with the small family George the First had to provide for; the fact that George the Second had a wife to maintain in becoming state in England, whereas George the First had saved himself from the occasion for any such outlay; the total amount left for George the Second to spend as compared with the total amount which the differing conditions left at the disposal

of his illustrious father. Let us see what the income of the Prince of Wales was computed to be by his friends at that time. He had fifty thousand a year allowance. From that, said his friends, we must deduct the land tax, which at two shillings in the pound amounts to £5000 a year. This brings the allowance down to £45,000. Then comes the sixpenny duty to the Civil List lottery, which has also to be deducted from the poor Prince's dwindling pittance, and likewise the fees payable at the Exchequer; and the sixpenny duty amounts to £1250, and the fees to about £750, so that altogether £7000 would have to be taken off, leaving the Prince only £43,000 allowance. Then, to be sure, there was the Duchy of Cornwall, the revenues of which, it was insisted, did not amount to more than £9000 a year, so that, all told, the Prince's income available for spending purposes was but £53,000 a year. And yet, they pleaded pathetically, the yearly expense of the Prince's household, acknowledged and ratified by the King himself, came to £63,000 without allowing his Royal Highness one shilling for the indulgence of that generous and charitable disposition with which Heaven had so bounteously endowed him.

Walpole's instinct had conducted him right. The reading of the message, which Walpole delivered with great rhetorical effect, carried confusion into the Tory ranks. 204 members voted for the address, 234 voted against it. The King's friends were in a majority of thirty. Archdeacon Coxe, in his "Life of Walpole," gives it as his opinion that the victory was obtained because some forty-five of the Tories quitted the House in a body before the division, believing that they were thus acting on constitutional principles, and that the interference of the House of Commons would be an unconstitutional, democratic, and dangerous innovation. But it is hardly possible to believe that the managers of the Prince's case could have been kept in total ignorance up to the last moment of the fact that forty-five Tories were determined to regard the interference of Parliament as unconstitutional, and to abstain from taking part in the division. It is declared to be positively certain that the "whips," as we should now call



them, of the Prince's party had canvassed every man on their own side, if not on both sides. They could not have made up anything like the number they announced in anticipation to the Prince if they had taken into account forty-five probable or possible abstentions among their own men. The truth evidently is that the reading of the King's message compelled a good many Tories to withdraw who already were somewhat uncertain as to the constitutionalism, in the Tory sense, of the course their leaders were taking. They would probably have swallowed their scruples but for the message; that dexterous stroke of policy was too much for them. How can we—they probably thus reasoned with themselves—back up to the last a Prince who positively refused to listen to the offer of a compromise spontaneously made by his father?

Money went much farther in those days than it does in ours. Fifty thousand pounds a year must have been a magnificent fortune for a Prince of Wales in the earlier part of the last century. On the other hand, George II. was literally stuffed and bloated with money. He had between eight and nine hundred thousand a year, and his wife was richly provided for. Odious bad taste, selfishness, and griping avarice were exhibited on both sides of the dispute; it would be hard to say which side showed to the lesser advantage. There was much poverty all this time in London, and indeed over the whole country. Trade was depressed; employment was hard to get; within a stone's throw of St. James's Palace men, women, and children were living in a chronic condition of semi-starvation. The court and the Parliament were wrangling fiercely over the question whether a King with a revenue of nearly a million could afford to give his eldest son an extra fifty thousand a year, and whether a Prince of Wales could live in decency on fifty-three thousand a year. The patient, cool-headed people of England who knew of all this—such of them as did—and who hated both King and Prince alike, yet put up with the whole thing simply because they had come to the conviction that nothing was to be gained by any attempt at a change. They had been passing through so many changes, they had been the victims of so many

experiments, that they had not the slightest inclination to venture on any new enterprise. They preferred to bear the ills they had ; but they knew that they were ills, and put on no affectation of a belief that they were blessings.

The debate in the House of Lords took place on Friday, February 25. Lord Carteret proposed the motion for the address to the King, and went over much of the same historical ground that Pulteney had traversed in the Commons. The Duke of Newcastle replied in his usual awkward and bungling fashion, with the uneasy attitudes and clownish gestures which were characteristic of him. He was not able to make any effective use of the King's message, and the Lord Chancellor read it for him. The division in the House of Lords showed 79 votes and 24 proxies for the King, in all 103 ; and 28 votes and 12 proxies for the Prince, in all 40 ; the King had a majority, therefore, of 63. Some of the peers, among them Lord Carteret and Lord Chesterfield, signed a protest against the decision of the House. The protest is, like so many other protests of the Lords, a very interesting and even valuable State paper, setting forth as it does all the genuine arguments of the Prince's supporters in the clearest form and in the fewest words. The House of Lords at that time was a more independent body than it has shown itself in later years. Even already, however, it was giving signs of that decay as an effective political institution which had begun to set in, and which was the direct result of Walpole's determination to rely upon the representative Chamber for the real work of governing the country. Neither Walpole nor any one else seemed to care very much about the debate or the division in the House of Lords. Already discussions in that chamber, no matter how eloquent and earnest in themselves, were beginning to assume that academic character which always, sooner or later, is exhibited where political debate is not endowed with any power to act directly on legislation.

Walpole's victory was a very cheap affair in one sense ; it only cost £900, of which £500 were given to one man and £400 to another. Even these two sums, Walpole used to say, were only advances. The bribed men were to have

had the money at the end of the session in any case, but they took advantage of the crisis to demand their pay at once. But in another sense it was a dear, a very dear, victory to the Minister. The consent of the King to the offer of compromise had been extorted, more than extorted, by Walpole. Indeed, as Walpole often afterwards told the story, it was on his part not an extortion, but an actual disregard and over-riding of the King's command. The King refused at the last moment to send the message to the Prince; Walpole said the peers were waiting to carry it, and that carry it they should, and he would not allow the King time to retract his former consent, and thereupon rushed off to the Lords of the Council and told them to go to the Prince with the message. Even the Queen, Walpole said, had never given a real assent to the policy of the message. When the victory in the Commons was won the King and Queen were at first well satisfied; but afterwards, when the Prince became more rude and insolent in his conduct, they both blamed Walpole for it, and insisted that his policy of compromise had only filled the head and heart of the young man with pride and obstinacy, and that he regarded himself as a conqueror, even though he had been nominally conquered. The King felt bitterly about this, and the grudge he bore to Walpole was of long endurance and envenomed anger. The King and Queen would have got rid of him then if they could, Walpole thought. "I have been much nearer than you think," he said to Lord Hervey, "to throwing it all up and going to end my days at Houghton in quiet." But he also told Hervey that he believed he was of more consequence than any man before him ever was, or perhaps than any man might ever be again, and so he still held on to his place. No doubt Walpole meant that he was of more consequence than any man had been or probably would be in England. He did not mean, as Lord Hervey would seem to give out, that he believed he was a greater and more powerful man than Julius Cæsar. Lord Hervey's comment, however, is interesting. "With regard to states and nations," he coldly says, "nobody's understanding is so much superior to the rest of mankind as to be missed in a week after they have



gone ; and, with regard to particulars, there is not a great banker that breaks who does not distress more people than the disgrace or retirement of the greatest Minister that ever presided in a Cabinet ; nor is there a deceased ploughman who leaves a wife and a dozen brats behind him that is not lamented with greater sincerity, as well as a loss to more individuals, than any statesman that ever wore a head or deserved to lose it." There is a good deal of wholesome, although perhaps somewhat melancholy, truth in what Lord Hervey says. Perhaps we ought not to call it melancholy ; it ought rather to be considered cheerful and encouraging, in the national sense. The world, some modern writer has said, shuts up the shop for no man. Yet there is, nevertheless, a tinge of melancholy in the thought of a great man toiling, striving, giving up all his days and much of his nights to the service of some cause or country, all the while firmly believing his life indispensable to the success of the cause, the prosperity of the country ; and he dies, and the cause and the country go on just the same.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### " ROGUES AND VAGABONDS "

THE condition of the English stage became a subject of some anxiety about this time, and was made the occasion for the introduction of an important Act of Parliament. The reader of to-day, looking back on the dramatic literature of the second George's reign, would not be apt to think that it called for special measures of restriction. The vices of the Restoration period had apparently worked out their own cure. The hideous indecency of Dryden, of Wycherley, and of Vanbrugh had brought about a certain reaction. The indecency of such authors as these was not merely a coarseness of expression such as most of the Elizabethan writers freely indulged in, and which has but little to do with the deeper questions of morality. Nor did its evil

consist merely in the choice of subjects which are painful to study, and of questionable influence on the mind. Many of the finest plays of Ford and Massinger and Webster turn on sins and crimes, the mere study of which it might reasonably be contended must always have the effect of disturbing the moral sense, if not of actually depraving the mind. But no one can pretend to find in the best of the Elizabethan writers any sympathy with viciousness, any stimulus to immorality. Of the Restoration authors, in general, the very contrary has to be said. They revel in uncleanness; they glorify immorality. It is the triumph and the honour of a gentleman to seduce his friend's wife or his neighbour's daughter. The business and the glory of men is the seduction of women. The sympathy of the dramatic author and his readers goes always with the seducer. The husband of the faithless wife is a subject of inextinguishable merriment and laughter. His own friends are made to laugh at him, and to feel a genuine delight in his suffering and his shame. The question of morality altogether apart, it seems positively wonderful to an English reader of to-day why the writers of the Restoration period should have always felt such an exuberant joy in the thought that a man's wife was unfaithful to him. The common feeling of all men, even the men meant to be best, in the plays of Wycherley and Vanbrugh, seems one that might find expression in some such words as these: "I should like to seduce every pretty married woman if I could, but if I have not time or chance for such delight it is at least a great pleasure and comfort to me to know that she has been seduced by somebody; it is always a source of glee to me to know that a husband has been deceived; and, if the husband himself comes to know it too, that makes my joy all the greater." The delight in sin seems to have made men in a certain sinful sense selfish. They delighted so in vice that they were glad to hear of its existence even where it brought them no direct personal gratification.

All this had changed in the days of George the Second. There had been a gradual and marked improvement in the moral tone of the drama, unaccompanied, it must be owned, by any very decided improvement in the moral tone of

society. Perhaps the main difference between the time of the Restoration and that of the early Georges is that the vice of the Restoration was wanton schoolboy vice, and that of the early Georges the vice of mature and practical men. In the Restoration time people delighted in showing off their viciousness and making a frolic and a parade of it ; at the time of the Georges they took their profligacy in a quiet, practical, man-of-the-world sort of way, and made no work about it. One effect of this difference was felt in the greater decorum, the greater comparative decorum, of the Georgian drama.

Yet this was the time when Walpole thought it necessary to introduce a measure putting the stage under new and severe restrictions. Walpole himself cared nothing about literature, and nothing about the drama ; and he was as little squeamish as man could possibly be in the matter of plain-spoken indecency. What troubled him was not the indecency of the stage, but its political innuendo. It never occurred to him to care whether anything said in Drury Lane or Covent Garden brought a blush to the cheek of any young person ; but he was much concerned when he heard of anything said there which was likely to make people laugh at a certain elderly person. As we have seen, he had never got the best of it in the long war of pamphlets and squibs and epigrams and caricature. It was out of his power to hire penmen who could stand up against such antagonists as Swift and Bolingbroke and Pulteney. He was out of humour with the press ; had been out of humour with it for a long time ; and now he began to be out of humour with the stage. Indeed, it should rather be said that he was now falling into a new fit of ill-humour with the stage ; for he had been very angry indeed with Gay for his "Beggars's Opera," and for the attempt at a continuation of "The Beggars's Opera" in the yet more audacious "Polly," which brought in more money to Gay from its not having been allowed to get on the stage than its brilliant predecessor had done after all its unexampled run. The measure of Walpole's wrath was filled by the knowledge that a piece was in preparation in which he was to be held up to public ridicule in the rudest and most unpromising way. Walpole acted with a certain boldness and



cunning. The play was brought to him, was offered for sale to him. This was an audacious attempt at blackmailing; and at first it appeared to be successful. Walpole agreed to the terms, bought the play, paid the money, and then proceeded at once to make the fact that such a piece had been written, and but for his payment might have been played, an excuse for the introduction of a measure to put the whole English stage under restriction, and to brand it with terms of shame. He picked out carefully all the worst passages, and had them copied, and sent round in private to the leading members of all parties in the House of Commons, and appealed to them to support him in passing a measure which he justified in advance by the illustrations of dramatic licentiousness thus brought under their own eyes. By this mode of action he secured beforehand an amount of support which made the passing of his Bill a matter of almost absolute certainty. Under these favourable conditions he introduced his Playhouse Bill.

The Playhouse Bill was a measure that attracted much attention, and provoked a very fierce controversy. It was a Bill to explain and amend so much of an Act made in the twelfth year of the reign of Queen Anne, entitled "An Act for reducing the laws relating to rogues, vagabonds, sturdy beggars, and vagrants, and sending them whither they ought to be sent," as relates to the common players of interludes. One clause empowered the Lord Chamberlain to prohibit the representation of any theatrical performance, and compelled all persons to send copies of new plays, or new parts or prologues or epilogues added to old plays, fourteen days before performance, in order that they might be submitted to the Lord Chamberlain for his permission or prohibition. Every person who set up a theatre, or gave a theatrical exhibition, without having a legal settlement in the place where the exhibition was given, or authority by letters patent from the Crown, or a licence from the Lord Chamberlain, was to be deemed a rogue and a vagabond, and subject to the penalties liberally dealt out to such homeless offenders. The system of licence thus virtually established by Walpole is the same that prevails in our own day. We do not indeed stigmatise managers and actors as rogues and

vagabonds, even if they should happen to give a theatrical performance without the fully ascertained permission of the authorities, and we no longer keep up the monopoly of what used to be called the patent theatres. But the principle of Walpole's Act is the principle of our present system. A play must have the permission of the Lord Chamberlain before it can be put on the stage ; and while it is in course of performance the Lord Chamberlain can insist on any amendments or alterations in the dialogue or in the dresses which he believes necessary in the interest of public morality. A manager is, therefore, put under conditions quite different from those which surround a publisher ; an actor is fenced in by preliminary restrictions which do not trouble an author. There is no censorship of the press ; there is a censorship of the theatre. If a publisher brings out any book which is grossly indecent or immoral or blasphemous, he can be prosecuted, and if a conviction be obtained he can of course be punished. But there is no way of preventing him from bringing out the book ; there is no authority which has to be appealed to beforehand for its sanction.

"Is this right?" The question is still asked. Why should the people of these countries submit to a censorship of the theatres, who would not submit to a censorship of the press? What can be the comparison between the harm done by a play which is seldom seen more than once by the same person, and is likely to be forgotten a week after it is seen, and the evil done by a bad book which finds its way into households, and lies on tables, and may be read again and again until its poison has really corrupted the mind? Again, a parent is almost sure to exercise some caution when he is taking his children to a theatre. He will find out beforehand what the play is like, and whether it is the sort of performance his daughter ought to see. But it is out of the question to suppose that a parent will be able to read beforehand every book that comes into his house in order to make sure that it contains nothing which is unfit for a girl to study. Why then not have a censorship of the press as well as of the theatre, or why have the one if you will not have the other? The answer to the first

question is that a censorship of the press is impossible in England. The multitude of publications forbids it. The most imaginative person would find his imagination fail him if he tried to realise in his mind the idea of the British public waiting for its morning newspaper several hours while the censor was crawling over its columns to find out whether they contained anything that could bring a blush to the cheek of a young person. It would be ridiculous to put in force a censorship for books which had no application to newspapers. But it is quite easy to maintain a certain form of censorship over the theatres. The number of plays brought out in a year is comparatively small. The preparation for each new play after it has been written and has passed altogether out of its author's hands must necessarily take some time, and there is hardly any practical inconvenience, therefore, in its being submitted to the Lord Chamberlain for his approval. But then comes the question, Is the censorship of any use? Are we any the better for having it? Should we not get on just as well without it? The answer, as it seems to us, ought to be that the censorship is on the whole of some use; that we are better with it than without it. It would be idle to contend that it is of any great service to public morality in the higher sense, but it is certainly of considerable advantage as a safeguard to public decency and decorum. The censorship of the stage in England to-day does not pretend to be a guardian of public morality. In all that relates to the higher moral law the public must take care of itself. Let us give one or two illustrations. Many sincere and not unintelligent persons firmly believe that the cause of public morality is injured by the representation of any play in which vice of a certain kind is brought under public notice, even though the object of the play may be to condemn the vice it exposes. But no censor of plays now would think of refusing to permit the performance of "Othello" on that account. To take a lower illustration: many people believe, and on better ground, that such a piece as "The Lady of Lyons" is injurious to public morals, because in that play the man who makes himself a leading actor in an infamous fraud becomes glorified into a hero and wins fame, fortune,



and wife in the end. But no censor would think of refusing to allow the performance of "The Lady of Lyons." The censor regards it as his duty to take care that indecent words are not spoken, and that what society considers indecent dressing is not exhibited. That is not much, it may be said, but it is better than nothing, and it is all we can get or would have. The censor cannot go ahead of the prevailing habits and the common opinion of the society of his day. If we had a censor who started a lofty code of morality and propriety all his own, public opinion would not stand him and his code. Suppose we had a censor who considered "Othello" shocking, and an ordinary low-necked dress or an ordinary ballet costume indecent, an outcry would soon be raised against him which would compel him to resign his purposes or his office. All the censor can do is to endeavour to order things so that nothing is said or exhibited which might shock society's sense of propriety, and this he can as a rule fairly accomplish. He must also take his society as he finds it. A West-end audience in London will stand allusions and jests and scantiness of costume which an East-end audience, made up almost exclusively of the working people and the poor, would not endure for a moment. The censor of plays can be much more rigid in his discipline when he is protecting the proprieties of poverty than when he is protecting the proprieties of fashion. The censorship works well in England on the whole, because it has almost always been worked by capable men of the world who understand that they are not dealing with children, who do not magnify their office, and do not strain after an austere authority which it would be quite impossible for them to exert.

The Playhouse Bill passed through the House of Commons easily enough. No one of any mark took much account of it, except Pulteney, who opposed it. The opposition offered by Pulteney does not appear to have been very severe or even serious, for no division was taken in the representative chamber. The feeling of every one was not so much concerned about what we should now call immorality or indecency, as about lampoons on public men. This fear was common to the Opposition as well as

to the Government, was shared alike by the Patriots and the court party ; and so the Bill was sent speedily through both Houses.

The debate was made memorable by the brilliant speech of Lord Chesterfield in the House of Lords. All contemporary accounts agree in describing this speech as one of the most fascinating and impressive ever heard in Parliament. Chesterfield strongly opposed the measure in the interests of public liberty and the freedom of the press. He knew where to hit hard when he called the licensing department which the Bill proposed to create "a new excise." The real object of the measure, he insisted, was not so much to restrain the stage as to shackle the press. "It is an arrow that does but glance at the stage ; the mortal wound seems designed against the liberty of the press." His argument to this effect was decidedly clever, keen, plausible, and telling. "You can prevent a play from being acted," he said, "but you do not prevent it from being printed. Therefore a play which by your censorship you refuse to allow to come on the stage, and in the interests of public morals very properly refuse, you allow to come in a printed form on the shelves of the book-sellers. The very fact that a play was not allowed to be put on the stage will only make people the more eager to read it in book form ; prohibited publications are in all countries diligently and generally sought after. Plays will be written in order to be prohibited by the censor and then to be sold in book form. What will come of this? Unquestionably an extension of the present measure for the purpose of preventing the printing as well as the public representation of plays. It is out of the question that society could allow a play to be read by all the public which it would not allow to be recited on the boards of a theatre. Now then you have got so far as the preventing of plays from being printed, what happens next? That a writer will turn his rejected, prohibited play into a novel or something of the kind ; will introduce a little narrative as well as dialogue, and in this slightly altered form offer his piece of scandalous work to the general reader. Then it will be asked, What! will you allow an infamous libel to be

printed and dispersed merely because it does not bear the title of a play? Thus, my Lords, from the precedent before us, we may, we shall be induced, nay, we can find no reason for refusing to lay the press under a general licence, and then we may bid adieu to the liberties of Great Britain."

There was a great deal of force and of justice in Chesterfield's reasoning. But its defect was that it made no account of the amount of common sense which must go to the administration of law in every progressive country. If the censorship of the stage had been worked in the spirit and style which Chesterfield expected, then it is beyond question that it would have to be followed up by a censorship of the press or withdrawn altogether. It would clearly be impossible to allow the very words which were not to be spoken on the stage to be set out in the clearest type on the shelves of every bookseller. But Chesterfield's own speech showed that he had entirely misconceived the extent and operation of a censorship of the stage in a country like England. The censorship of the stage which Chesterfield assumed to be coming, and which he condemned, could not possibly, as we have shown, exist in these islands. The censorship of the stage, if it were to move in such a direction, would not be paving the way for a censorship of the press, but simply paving the way for its own abolition. The speech was a capital and a telling piece of argument addressed to an audience who were glad to hear something decided and animated on the subject; but it never could have deceived Chesterfield himself. It took no account of the elementary political fact that all legislation is compromise, and that the supposed logical and extreme consequences of no measure are ever allowed to follow its enactment. The censorship of plays has gone on since that time, and it has not interfered with the general liberty of acting and of publishing dramatic pieces. It has not compelled Parliament to choose between introducing a censorship of the press and abolishing the censorship of plays. We have never heard of any play worth seeing which was lost to the English stage through the censorship of the drama, nor was the suggestion ever made by the



most reactionary Ministry that it should be followed up by a censorship of the press.

Indeed in Walpole's day it might almost have seemed as if the stage required censorship less than the ballad. Probably, if it had been thought humanly possible to prevent the publication and the circulation of scurrilous poems against eminent men and women, Walpole might have ventured on the experiment. But he had too much robust common sense not to recognise the impossibility of doing anything effective in the way of repression in that field of art.

Certainly the muse of Song made herself very often a shrieking sister in those days. When she turned her attention to politics, and had her patrons to be sung up and her patrons' enemies to be sung down, she very often screamed and called names, and cursed like an intoxicated fishwife. Pope, Swift, Gay, Hervey, flung metrical abuse about in the coarsest fashion. There seemed to be hardly any pretence at accuracy of description or epithet. If the poet or the poet's patron did not like a man or woman, no word of abuse was too coarse or foul to be employed against the odious personage. Women, indeed, got off rather worse than men on the whole; even Lord Hervey did not suffer so much at the hands of Pope as did Mary Wortley Montagu. The poets of one faction did not spare even the princes and princesses, even the King or Queen, of another. Furious and revolting lines were written about George and his wife by one set of versifiers; about the Prince of Wales by another. No hour, no event, was held sacred. Around a death-bed the wits were firing off their sarcasms on its occupant. Some of the verses written about Queen Caroline, verses often containing the foulest and filthiest libels, followed her into the sick-chamber, the bed of death, the coffin, and the grave. One could easily understand all this if the libellers had been vulgar and venal Grub Street hacks who were paid to attack some enemy of their paymaster. But the vilest calumnies of the time were penned by men of genius, by men of the highest rank in literature; by men whose literary position made them the daily companions of great nobles and of princes

and princesses. Political and social hatred seemed to level all distinctions and to obliterate most of the Christian virtues.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### THE BANISHED PRINCE

THE conduct of the Prince of Wales was becoming more and more insolent to the King and Queen every day. Perhaps King George was right in his belief that Walpole's policy of compromise had made Frederick think himself of some real account in public affairs. It is certain that he began to act as if he were determined the whole nation should know how thoroughly independent he was of the authority of his father and mother. He had soon a peculiar opportunity of making a display of this ferocious independence.

The Princess of Wales was about to have her first child. For some reason, which no one could well explain, the news of the coming event was not made known to the King and Queen until the hour of its coming was very near. Even then there seems to have been some conscious or unconscious misleading of the King and Queen as to the actual time when according to calculations the child was to be born. The King and Queen were left under the impression that it was a good deal farther off than it really proved to be. The Queen, with all her natural goodness of heart, was painfully suspicious. She was suspicious sometimes even of those she loved and trusted; and she hated both the Prince and the Princess of Wales. She had taken it into her head that the Princess of Wales was not likely to have a child. She persisted in asserting to those around her that the Princess was not pregnant and never would be. Naturally when she allowed her mind to be filled with this idea the next conclusion for her to jump to was the conviction that a supposititious infant was about to be palmed off on the palace and the country. This idea

took full possession of her mind, and she kept constantly telling those around her that, no matter when or where the event might take place, she was determined to be in at that birth. In the most explicit and emphatic way she told people that she would make sure for herself that no child was imported in a warming-pan this time.

The King and Queen were now in Hampton Court Palace; the Prince and Princess of Wales were also living there. Nothing would have been easier for the Queen than to carry out her purpose if the Princess were allowed to remain in the palace until after her confinement. It was reported to her that the Prince had said he was anxious that his wife should be confined in London—in St. James's Palace. This the Queen was determined to prevent if she could. The Princess Caroline fully shared her mother's belief that the Prince of Wales was quite capable of palming off a spurious child on the country; and indeed the King became after a while as well convinced of it as his wife and his daughter. It was resolved then that a message should be sent from the King to the Prince of Wales, giving a sort of royal command that the Princess should remain at Hampton Court until after her confinement. Lord Hervey shook his head at all this. He did not believe in the warming-pan phantasy; and he felt sure that in any case the Prince of Wales would contrive to get his wife out of Hampton Court if he wished to do so. What was to prevent the Princess going up to London a little before her time, and then affecting to fall suddenly ill there, and declaring that she could not endure the pain and danger of removal? Lord Hervey had seen a good deal of the Prince in old days. They had had friendships and quarrels and final estrangement, and he knew his Prince pretty well.

What Hervey had predicted came to pass, but in a worse way than he had ventured to predict. The Queen kept urging Walpole to send the King's order to the Prince. Walpole kept putting it off. For one reason, the Minister had been told that the confinement was to be expected in October, and this was only July. It is very probable, too, that he shared Hervey's scepticism alike as to the supposi-



titious child and the possibility of keeping the Prince's wife at Hampton Court against the Prince's will. The royal command was never sent.

On Sunday, July 31, 1737, the Prince of Wales and the Princess dined publicly with the King and Queen in Hampton Court Palace. Not a word was said to any one about an early approach of the confinement. The Princess seemed in her usual condition. The two sets of royal personages did not talk with each other at this time, although they thus had ceremonial meetings in public. The Queen called the attention of some one near her to the Princess's appearance, and insisted that she was not going to have a child at all. When dinner was over, the Prince and Princess went back to their own apartments; and later that evening the Princess was taken with the pains of labour. Then followed what has hardly ever happened in the story of the life of a poor washerwoman or a peasant's wife. The unfortunate Princess was far gone in her agony before any one had time to think; and before those around them had much time to think the Prince of Wales had determined to carry her off, groaning in labour as she was, and take her ten miles to London. The whole story is a shocking one; and we shall put it into a very narrow compass. But it has to be told somehow. By the help of an equerry and a dancing-master, the writhing Princess was hoisted downstairs and got into a carriage. The dancing-master, Dunoyer, was a hanger-on and favourite of the Prince; and, being employed to teach dancing to the younger children of George the Second, acted as a kind of licensed spy, so Hervey says, on the one family and the other. In the carriage with the Prince and Princess came Lady Archibald Hamilton, who was understood to be the Prince's mistress. No royal movement in those days would seem to be thought quite complete without the presence of some mistress of the King or Prince. The carriage reached London about ten o'clock. It had been driven at full gallop, the poor Princess twisting and screaming all the time, and the Prince scolding at her and telling her it was nonsense to cry and groan about pain which would so soon be over. When they got to St.

James's Palace there were naturally no preparations made for a lying-in. The Prince and Lady Archibald Hamilton set to work to get some things in readiness, and found they had to send round the neighbourhood to collect some of the most necessary appliances for such an occasion. So pitifully unprovided was the palace that no clean sheets could be found; and the Prince and his mistress put the Princess to bed between two table-cloths. At a quarter before eleven the birth took place. A tiny baby was born; "a little rat of a girl," Lord Hervey says, "about the bigness of a good large tooth-pick." The little rat of a girl grew up, however, to be a handsome woman. She was seen by John Wilson Croker in 1809, and had still the remains of beauty. The Lords of the Council had been hurriedly sent for to be present at the birth; but the event was so sudden and so unexpected that only Lord Wilmington, the President of the Council, and Lord Godolphin, the Privy Seal, arrived in time to be able to testify that no warming-pan operation was accomplished.

The unsuspecting King and Queen had gone to bed, according to their usual quiet custom, at eleven o'clock. Their feelings, as a certain class of writers are in the habit of saying, may be more easily imagined than described when they were roused from sleep about two in the morning by the couriers, who came to tell them that the Princess had become the mother of a girl, and that the Prince and Princess were at St. James's Palace, London. There was racing and chasing. Within half an hour the Queen was on the road to London with the two eldest Princesses, Lord Hervey, and others. The Queen comported herself with some patience and dignity when she saw the Prince and Princess. The child was shown to her. No clothes had yet been found for it but some napkins and an old red cloak. "The good God bless you, poor little creature!" said the Queen in French; "you have come into a very disagreeable world!"

The King and Queen consented to become the godfather and godmother of the poor little creature who had been brought thus disagreeably into this disagreeable world. But the conduct of the Prince was regarded as unpardon-

able, and he was banished by royal letter from the King's palace, whether at Hampton Court or St. James's. The Prince's own party, Pulteney and his colleagues, utterly refused to give their sanction to the extraordinary course which Frederick had taken. Bolingbroke wrote from France, angrily and scornfully condemning it. But the Patriots were willing and resolved to stand the Prince's friends all the same, and they had not even the courage to advise him to make a frank and full apology for his conduct. Indeed the action of the Prince seems to suggest an approach to insanity rather than deliberate and reasoned perverseness. He had forced his wife to run the risk of losing her own life and her child's life, he had grossly and wantonly offended his father and mother, and he had thrown a secrecy and mystery round the birth of the infant which, if ever there came to be a dispute about the succession, would give his enemies the most plausible excuse for proclaiming that a spurious child had been imposed upon the country. As a friend of the Queen said at the time, if ever the crown came to be fought for again, the only question could be whether the people would rather have the Whig bastard or the Tory bastard.

The whole business, as might be expected, caused a terrible scandal. Not merely was the Prince banished from the palace, not merely did the King refuse to see him or to hold further communication with him, but it was formally announced by the Secretaries of State to all the foreign Ministers that it would be considered a mark of respect to the Sovereign if they would abstain from visiting the Prince. Furthermore a message was sent in writing to all peers, peeresses, and privy councillors, declaring that no one who went to the Prince's court would be admitted into the King's presence. Never probably was domestic dirty linen more publicly washed. Nevertheless, it very soon was made apparent that the course taken by the King was in strict accordance with a precedent which at one time had a very direct application to himself. Some of the Prince's friends thought it a clever stroke of policy just then to print and publish the letters which passed between the late King and the present Sovereign when the latter was



Prince of Wales and got into a quarrel with his father. The late King sent his vice-chamberlain to order his son "that he and his domestics must leave my house." A copy was also published of a circular letter signed by the honoured name of Joseph Addison, then Secretary of State, addressed to the English Ministers at foreign courts, giving the King's version of the whole quarrel, in order that they might report him and his cause aright to the unsatisfied.

Lord Hervey is inclined to think that it was not the friends of the Prince, but rather Walpole himself, who got these letters printed. Hervey does not see what good the publication could do to the Prince and the Prince's cause, but suggests that it might be a distinct service to Walpole and Walpole's master to show that the reigning King in his early days had been treated with even more harshness than he had just shown to his own son, and with far less cause to justify the harshness. Still it seems to us natural for the Prince's friends to believe it would strengthen him in popular sympathy if it were brought before men's minds that the very same sort of treatment of which George II. complained when it was visited on him by his own father he now had not scrupled nor shamed to visit upon his son. Among other discoveries made at this time with regard to the more secret history of the late reign it was found out that George I. actually entertained and encouraged a project for having the Prince of Wales, now George II., put on board some war-vessel and "carried off to any part of the world that your Majesty may be pleased to order." This fact—for a fact it seems to be—did not get to the public knowledge; but it came to the knowledge of Lord Hervey, who probably had it from the Queen herself, and it is confirmed by other and different testimony. A Prince of Wales kidnapped and carried out of civilisation by the command of his royal father would have made a piquant chapter in modern English history.

The Prince and Princess went to Kew in the first instance, and then the Prince took Norfolk House, in St. James's Square, for his town residence, and Cliefden for his country place. The Prince put himself forward more conspicuously than ever as the head of the Patriot party. It was

reported to Walpole that in Frederick's determination to make himself popular he was resolved to have a Bill brought forward in the coming session of Parliament to repeal the Test Act. The Test Act was passed in the reign of Charles II., 1673, and it declared that all officers, civil or military, of the Government must take the sacrament according to the forms of the Church of England, and must take the oaths against the doctrine of transubstantiation. This Act was, of course, regarded as a serious grievance by the Dissenters of all denominations. Some few eminent Churchmen, like Dr. Hoadley, Bishop of Winchester, had always been opposed to the narrow-minded policy of the Act. Hoadley, indeed, had made himself a sort of leader of the dissenting communities on this subject. For that and other reasons he had been described as the greatest Dissenter who ever wore a mitre. When the report got about that an attempt was to be made to have the Test Act repealed, Walpole, with his usual astuteness, sent for the Bishop, knowing very well that, if such a determination had been come to, Dr. Hoadley would be among the very first men to be consulted on the subject. Walpole expressed his mind very freely to Hoadley. A coldness had long existed between them, which Walpole's gift of the Bishopric of Winchester had not removed. Hoadley had thought Walpole slow, lukewarm, and indifferent about movements in reform of Church and State, which Hoadley regarded as essential parts of the programme of the Whig party. Walpole was perfectly frank with him on this occasion, and explained to him the difficulty which would come up in English affairs if the Prince of Wales were encouraged to seek popularity at the expense of the King and Queen by making himself the champion of the Dissenters' grievances. Hoadley met Walpole in a spirit of similar frankness. He declared that he always had been and always should be in favour of the repeal of the Test Act, but that he disapproved altogether of the Prince being set up in opposition to the King; and he believed that even the repeal of the Test Act would be bought at too dear a cost if it were the means of bringing the King into a distressing family quarrel. Therefore the

Bishop declared that he would give no encouragement to such a scheme, of which, he said, he had lately heard nothing from the Prince; and that, whatever kindnesses he might receive from Frederick, he should never forget his duty to George. Walpole was delighted with Hoadley's bearing and Hoadley's answer, and seemed as if he never could praise him enough. No one can question Hoadley's sincerity. We must only try to get ourselves back into the framework and the spirit of an age when a sound patriot and a high-minded ecclesiastic could be willing to postpone indefinitely an act of justice to a whole section of the community in order to avoid the risk of having the Sovereign brought into disadvantageous comparison with the Sovereign's eldest son. Walpole approved of the Test Act no more than Hoadley did, although the spirit of his objection to it was far less positive and less exalted than that of Hoadley. But Walpole was, of course, an avowed Opportunist; he never professed or pretended to be anything better. There is nothing surprising in the fact that he regarded an act of justice to the Dissenters as merely a matter of public convenience, to be performed when it could be performed without disturbing anybody of importance. Hoadley must have looked at the subject from an entirely different point of view; it must have been to him a question of justice or injustice; yet he, too, was quite ready to put it off indefinitely rather than allow it to be made the means of obtaining a certain amount of popular favour for the Prince of Wales as opposed to his father the King. We shall see such things occurring again and again in the course of this history. The agreement of Walpole and Hoadley did, indeed, put off the repeal of the Test Act for a pretty long time. The brand and stigma on the Protestant Dissenters as well as on the Roman Catholics was allowed to remain in existence for nearly another century of English history. We are now in 1737, and the Test Act was not repealed until 1828. Historians are sometimes reproached for paying too much attention to palace squabbles; yet a palace squabble becomes a matter of some importance if it can postpone an act of national justice for by far the greater part of a century.



There was a good deal of talk about this time of the possibility of adopting some arrangement for the separation of Hanover from the English crown. The fact of the Princess of Wales having given birth to a daughter and not a son naturally led to a revival of this question. The electorate of Hanover could not descend to a woman, and if the Prince of Wales should have no son some new arrangement would have to be made. The Queen was very anxious that Hanover should be secured for her second son, to whom she was much attached, and the King was understood to be in favour of this project. On the other hand, it was given out that the Prince of Wales would be quite willing to renounce his rights in favour of his younger brother on condition of his getting the fifty thousand a year additional for which he had been clamouring in Parliament. Nothing could be more popular with the country than any arrangement which would sever the connection between the crown of England and the electorate of Hanover. If the Prince was seeking popularity, such a proposal coming from him would be popular indeed, provided it were not spoiled by the stipulation about the fifty thousand a year. The Queen's comment upon the rumours as to the Prince's intention was that in her firm belief he would sell the reversion of the crown of England to the Pretender if only the Pretender offered him money enough. Nothing came of the talk about Hanover just then. The King and the Queen had soon something else to think of.

## CHAPTER XXIX

### THE QUEEN'S DEATH-BED

THE Queen had long been dying; dying by inches. In one of her confinements she had been stricken with an ailment from which she suffered severely. She refused to let any one, even the King, know what was the matter with her. She had the strongest objection to being regarded as

an invalid ; and she feared, too, that if anything serious were known to be the matter with her she might lose her hold over her selfish husband, who only cared for people as long as they were active in serving and pleasing him. An invalid was to George merely a nuisance. Let us do Caroline justice. She was no doubt actuated by the most sincere desire to be of service to the King, and she feared that if she were to make it known how ill she was the King might insist on her giving up active life altogether. Not only did she take no pains to get better, but in order to prove that she was perfectly well she used to exert herself in a manner which might have been injurious to the health of a very strong woman. When at Richmond she used to walk several miles every morning with the King ; and more than once, Walpole says, when she had the gout in her foot, she dipped her whole leg in cold water to be ready to attend him. "The pain," says Walpole, "her bulk, and the exercise threw her into such fits of perspiration as routed the gout ; but those exertions hastened the crisis of her distemper." History preserves some curious pictures of the manner in which the morning prayers were commonly said to Queen Caroline. The Queen was being dressed by her ladies in her bedroom ; the door of the bedroom was left partly open ; the chaplain read the prayers in the outer room, and had to kneel, as he read them, beneath a great painting of a naked Venus ; and just within the half-open bedroom door her Majesty, according to Horace Walpole, "would frequently stand some minutes in her shift, talking to her ladies."

Robert Walpole was the first to discover the real and the very serious nature of the Queen's malady. He was often alone with her for the purpose of arranging as to the course of action which they were to prevail upon the King to believe to be of his own inspiration, and accordingly to adopt. Shortly after the death of Walpole's wife he was closeted with the Queen. Her Majesty questioned him closely about the cause of his wife's death. She was evidently under the impression that Lady Walpole had died from the effects of a peculiar kind of rupture, and she put to Walpole a variety of very intimate questions as to the symptoms and progress of the disease. Walpole had

long suspected, as many others had, that there was something seriously wrong with the Queen. He allowed her to go on with her questions, and he became satisfied in his own mind that the Queen herself was suffering from the disorder about which she was so anxious to be told.

On August 26, 1737, it was reported over London that the Queen was dead. The report was unfounded, or at least premature. Caroline had had a violent attack, but she rallied and was able to go about again at Hampton Court with the King. On Wednesday, November 9, 1737, she was suddenly stricken down, and this was her death-stroke. She did not die at once, but lingered and lingered.

There are few chapters of history more full of strange, sardonic contrast, and grim, ghastly humour, than those which describe these death-bed scenes. The Queen undergoing a succession of painful operations; now groaning and fainting, now telling the doctors not to mind her foolish cries; now indulging in some chaff with them—"Is not Ranby (the surgeon) sorry it isn't his own cross old wife he is cutting up?"—the King sometimes blubbering, and sometimes telling his dying wife that her staring eyes looked like those of a calf whose throat had been cut; the King, who, in his sudden tenderness and grief, would persist in lying outside the bed, and thereby giving the poor, perishing sufferer hardly room to move; the messages of affected condolence arriving from the Prince of Wales, with requests to be allowed to see his mother, which requests the mother rejects with bitterness and contempt—all this sets before us a picture such as seldom, happily for the human race, illustrates a death-bed in palace, garret, or prison cell. The King was undoubtedly sincere in his grief, at least for the time. He did love the Queen in a sort of way; and she had worked upon all his weaknesses and vices and made herself necessary to him. He did not see how life was to go on for him without her; and as he thought of this he cried like a child whose mother is about to leave it. Over and over again has the story been told of the dying Queen's appeal to her husband to take a new wife after her death, and the King's earnest disclaimer of any such purpose; the assurance that he would have



mistresses, and then the Queen's cry of cruel conviction from hard experience, "Oh, mon Dieu, cela n'empêche pas!" "I know," says Lord Hervey, who tells the story, "that this episode will hardly be credited, but it is literally true." One does not see why the episode should hardly be credited, why it should not be taken at once as historical and true. It is not out of keeping with all other passages of the story; it is in the closest harmony and symmetry with them. The King always made his wife the *confidante* of his amours and intrigues. He had written to her once, asking her to bring to court the wife of some nobleman or gentleman, and he told her frankly that he admired this lady and wanted to have her near him in order that he might have an intrigue with her, and he knew that she, his wife, would always be glad to do him a pleasure. Thackeray, in his lecture, often speaks of the King as "Sultan George." George had, in the matter of love-making, no other notions than those of a Sultan. He had no more idea of his wife objecting to his mistresses than a Sultan would have about the chief Sultana's taking offence at the presence of his concubines. The fact that the Queen lay dying did not put any restraint on any of George's ways. He could not be kept from talking loudly all the time: he could not be kept from bawling out observations about his wife's condition which, if they were made only in whispers, must have tended to alarm and distress an invalid. It is not the frank brutality of George's words which surprises us; it is rather the sort of cross-light they throw on what was after all a tender part of his coarse and selfish nature. Every reader of the history and the memoirs of that reign must be prepared to understand and to appreciate the absolute sincerity of the King's words; the settled belief that the Queen could not possibly have any objection to his taking to himself as many mistresses as he pleased. One is a little surprised at the uncouth sentimentality of the thought that nevertheless it might be a disrespect to her memory if he were to take another wife. What a light all this lets in upon the man, and the court, and the time! As regards indiscriminate amours and connections, poor, stupid, besotted George was simply on a level with the

lower animals. Charles the Second, Louis the Fourteenth, Louis the Fifteenth even—these at their worst of times were gentlemen. It was only at the Hanoverian court of England that such an interchange of appeal and reassurance could take place as that which was murmured and blubbered over the death-bed of Queen Caroline. “Horror,” says one of the great Elizabethan poets, “waits on the death-beds of princes.” Horror in the truest sense waited on the death-bed of that poor, patient, faithful, unscrupulous, unselfish Queen.

The Queen kept rallying and sinking, and rallying again ; and the King’s moods went up and down with each passing change in his wife’s condition. Now she sank, and he buried his face in the bedclothes and cried ; now she recovered a little, and he rated at her and made rough jokes at her. At one moment he appeared to be all tenderness to her ; at another moment he went on as if the whole illness were a mere sham to worry him, and she might get up and be well if she would only act like a sensible woman.

The Prince of Wales made an attempt to see the Queen. The King spoke of him as a puppy and a scoundrel ; jeered at his impudent, affected airs of duty and affection, declared that neither he nor the Queen was in a condition to see him act his false, whining, cringing tricks now, and sent him orders to get out of the place at once. His Majesty continued all through the dying scenes to rave against the Prince of Wales, and call him rascal, knave, puppy, and scoundrel. The Queen herself, although she did not use language quite as strong, yet expressed just as resolute a dislike or detestation of her son, and an utter disbelief in his sincerity. She declared that she knew he only wanted to see her in order that he should have the joy of knowing she was dead five minutes sooner than if he had to wait in Pall Mall to hear the glad tidings. She told the listeners that if ever she should consent to see the Prince they might be sure she had lost her senses. Princess Caroline was in constant attendance on the Queen. So was Lord Hervey. The Princess, however, became unwell herself, and the Princess Emily sat up with the Queen. But

Caroline would not consent to be removed from her mother. A couch was fitted up for her in a room adjoining the Queen's ; and Lord Hervey lay on a mattress on the floor at the foot of the Princess's bed. The King occasionally went to his own rooms, and there was peace for the time in the dying woman's chamber. Probably the only two that truly and unselfishly loved the Queen were occupying the couch and the mattress in that outer room.

The Queen talked often to Princess Caroline, and commended to her the care of her two younger sisters. She talked to her son William, Duke of Cumberland, then little more than sixteen years old, admonished him to be a support to his father, and to "try to make up for the disappointment and vexation he must receive from your profligate and worthless brother." But she also admonished him to attempt nothing against his brother, and only to mortify him by showing superior merit. She asked for her keys, and gave them to the King. She took off her finger a ruby ring which he had given her at her coronation, and put it on his finger, and said to him, almost as patient Grizel does, "Naked I came to you, and naked I go from you." All who were present at this episode in the dying were in tears, except the Queen herself. She seemed absolutely composed ; indeed she was anxious that the end should come. She had no belief in the possibility of her recovery, and she only wanted to be released now from "the fever called living." Except for the bitter outbursts of anger and hatred against the Prince of Wales, the poor Queen seems to have borne herself like a true-hearted, resigned, tender wife, mother, and Christian woman.

An operation was tried, with the consent of the King. Thereupon arises a controversy not unlike that which followed an imperial death in very modern European history. Lord Hervey insists that the surgeons showed utter incapacity, made a shocking and fatal mistake ; cut away as mortified flesh that in which there was no mortification whatever. Then Sir Robert Walpole, who had been sent for, comes on the scene. The King ordered him to be brought in from the outer room, and Walpole came in and tried to drop on his knees to kiss the King's hand.



It was not easy to do. Sir Robert was very bulky and unwieldy. He found it hard to get down, and harder still to get up again. However, the solemn duty was accomplished somehow, and then Sir Robert was conducted to the Queen's bedside. He dropped some tears, which we may be sure were sincere, even if by no means unselfish. He was in utter dread of losing all his power over the King if the Queen were to die. The Queen recommended the King, her children, and the kingdom to his care, and Sir Robert seems to have been much pleased with the implied compliment of the recommendation.

The moment Walpole got to private speech with Lord Hervey, he at once exhibited the nature of his grief and alarm. "My Lord," he exclaimed, "if this woman should die, what a scene of confusion will there be! Who can tell into whose hands the King will fall, or who will have the management of him?" Lord Hervey tried to reassure him, and told him that his influence over the King would be stronger than ever. Walpole could not see it, and they argued the matter over for a long time. The talk lasted two or three hours, much to Lord Hervey's dissatisfaction, for it kept him out of bed, and this happened to be the first night since the Queen had fallen ill when he had any chance of a good night's rest; and now behold, with the Prime Minister's unseasonable anxiety about the affairs of State, Lord Hervey's chance is considerably diminished. Even this little episode has its fit and significant place in the death-bed story. The Prime Minister will insist on talking over the prospects—his own prospects or those of the nation—with the lord-in-waiting; and the lord-in-waiting is very sleepy, and, having had a hope of a night's rest, is only alarmed lest the hope should be disappointed. No one appears to have said a word as to what would be better or worse for the Queen.

The Queen was strongly under the belief that she would die on a Wednesday. She was born on a Wednesday, married on a Wednesday, crowned on a Wednesday, gave birth to her first child on a Wednesday; almost all the important events of her life had befallen her on Wednesday, and it seemed in the fitness of things that Wednesday

should bring with it the close of that life. Wednesday came; and, as Lord Hervey puts it, "some wise, some pious, and a great many busy, meddling, impertinent people about the court" began asking each other, and everybody else they met, whether the Queen had any clergyman to pray for her and minister to her. Hervey thought all this very offensive and absurd, and was of opinion that if the Queen cared about praying and that sort of thing she could pray for herself as well as any one else could do it. Hervey, however, kept this free and easy view of things discreetly to himself. He was shocked at the rough cynicism of Sir Robert Walpole, who cared as little about prayer as Hervey or any other man living, but was perfectly willing that all the world should know his views on the subject. The talk of the people about the court reached Walpole's ears, and he recommended the Princess Emily to propose to the King and Queen that the Archbishop of Canterbury should be sent for. The Princess seemed to be a little afraid to make so audacious a proposal to the King, Defender of the Faith, as the suggestion that a minister of the Church should be allowed to pray by the bedside of the dying Queen. Sir Robert encouraged her in his characteristic way. In the presence of a dozen people, Hervey tells us, Sir Robert said to the Princess: "Pray, madam, let this farce be played; the Archbishop will act it very well. You may bid him be as short as you will. It will do the Queen no hurt, no more than any good; and it will satisfy all the wise and good fools who will call us atheists if we don't pretend to be as great fools as they are."

The advice of the statesman was taken. The wise and good fools were allowed to have it their own way. The Archbishop was sent for, and he came and prayed with the Queen every morning and evening; the King always graciously bolting out of the room the moment the prelate came in. But the wise and good fools were not satisfied with the concession which enlightenment had condescended to make. Up to this time they had kept asking, "Has the Queen no one to pray with her?" Now the whispered question was, "Has the Queen taken—will the Queen take—the sacrament?" Some people hinted that she

could not receive the sacrament because she could not make up her mind to be reconciled to her son; others doubted whether she had religious feeling enough to consent to ask for the sacrament or to receive it. All this time the King chattered perpetually to Lord Hervey, to the physicians and surgeons, and to his children, about the virtues and gifts of the Queen. He deplored in advance the lonely, dull life he would have to lead when she was taken from him. He was in frequent bursts of tears. He declared that he had never been tired one moment in her company; that he could never have been happy with any other woman in the world; and he paid her the graceful and delicate compliment of saying that if she had not been his wife he would rather have her for a mistress than any other woman with whom he had ever held such relationship. Yet he hardly ever went into her room, after one of these outpourings of tender affection, without being rough to her and shouting at her and bullying her. When her pains and her wounds made her move uneasily in her bed, he asked her how the devil she could sleep when she would never lie still a moment. He stumped about the room as if it were a chamber in a barrack; he talked incessantly; gave all manner of directions; made the unfortunate Queen swallow all manner of foods and drinks because he took it into his head that they would do her good; and she submitted, poor, patient, pitiable creature, and swallowed and vomited, swallowed again and vomited again, and uttered no complaint.

Even in his outbursts of grief the King's absurd personal vanity constantly came out; for he was always telling his listeners that the Queen was devoted to him because she was wildly enamoured of his person as well as his genius. Then he told long stories about his own indomitable courage, and went over and over again on account of the heroism he had displayed during a storm at sea. One night the King was in the outer room with the Princess Emily and Lord Hervey. The puffy little King wore his nightgown and nightcap, and was sitting in a great chair with his thick legs on a stool; an heroic figure, decidedly. The Princess was lying on a couch. Lord Hervey sat by the



fire. The King started the old story of the storm and his own bravery, and gave it to his companions in all its familiar details. The Princess at last closed her eyes, and seemed to be fast asleep. The King presently went into the Queen's room, and then the Princess started up and asked, "Is he gone?" and added fervently, "How tiresome he is!" Lord Hervey asked if she had not been asleep; she said, no; she had only closed her eyes in order to escape taking part in the conversation, and that she very much wished she could close her ears as well. "I am sick to death," the dutiful Princess said, "of hearing of his great courage every day of my life. One thinks now of mamma, and not of him. Who cares for his old storm? I believe, too, it is a great lie, and that he was as much afraid as I should have been, for all what he says now," and she added a good many more comments to the same effect. Then the King came back into the room, and his daughter ceased her comment on his bravery and his truthfulness.

"One thinks of mamma, and not of him." That was exactly what George would not have. He did dearly love the Queen after his own fashion; he was deeply grieved at the thought of losing her; but he did not choose to play second fiddle even to the dying. So in all his praises of her and his laments for her he never failed to endeavour to impress on his hearers the idea of his own immense superiority to her and to everybody else. There is hardly anything in fiction so touching, so pitiful, so painful, as this exposition of a naked, brutal, yet not quite selfish, not wholly unloving, egotism. The Queen did not die on the Wednesday. Thursday and Friday passed over in just the same way, with just the same incidents—with the King alternately blubbering and bullying, with his panegyrics of the dying woman, and the twenty times told tale of "his old storm." The Queen was growing weaker and weaker. Those who watched around her bed wondered how she was able to live so long in such a condition of utter weakness. On the evening of Sunday, November 20, she asked Dr. Tesier quietly how long it was possible that her struggle could last. He told her that he was "of opinion that your Majesty will be soon relieved." She thanked him for telling

her, and said in French, "So much the better." About ten o'clock that same night the crisis came. The King was asleep in a bed laid on the floor at the foot of the Queen's bed. The Princess Emily was lying on a couch in a corner of the room. The Queen began to rattle in her throat. The nurse gave the alarm, and said the Queen was dying. The Princess Caroline was sent for, and Lord Hervey. The Princess came in time; Lord Hervey was a moment too late. The Queen asked in a low, faint voice that the window might be opened, saying she felt an asthma. Then she spoke the one word, "Pray." The Princess Emily began to read some prayers, but had only got out a few words before the Queen shuddered and died. The Princess Caroline held a looking-glass to the Queen's lips, and, finding the surface undimmed, quietly said, "'Tis over"; and, according to Lord Hervey, "said not one word more, nor as yet shed one tear, on the arrival of a misfortune the dread of which had cost her so many."

"Pray!" That was the last word the Queen ever spoke. All the wisdom of the court statesmen, all the proud, intellectual unbelief, all the cynical contempt for the weaknesses of intellect which allow ignorant people to believe their destiny linked with that of some other and higher life—all that Bolingbroke, Chesterfield, Walpole, would have taught and sworn oaths for—all was mocked by that one little word, "pray," which came last from the lips of Queen Caroline. Bring saucy Scepticism there; make her laugh at that!

The story would be incomplete if it were not added that while the Queen's body was yet unburied the King came to Hervey and told him, laughing and crying alternately, that he had just seen Horace Walpole, the brother of Robert, and that Walpole was weeping for the Queen with so bad a grace "that in the middle of my tears he forced me to burst into laughter." Amid this explosion of tears and laughter the story of the Queen's life comes fittingly to an end.

The moment the breath was out of the Queen's body, Walpole set about a course of action which should strengthen his position as Prime Minister of the King. At first his strong fear was that with the life of the Queen had

passed away his own principal hold upon the confidence of George. He told Hervey that no one could know how often he had failed utterly by argument and effort of his own to bring the King to agree to some action which he considered absolutely necessary for the good of the State, and how after he had given up the attempt in mere despair the Queen had taken the matter in hand, and so managed the King that his Majesty at last became persuaded that the whole idea was his own original conception, and he bade her send for Walpole and explain it to him, and get Walpole to carry it into execution. Hervey endeavoured to reassure him by many arguments, and among the rest by one which showed how well Hervey understood King George's weaknesses. Hervey said the one thing which was in Walpole's way while the Queen lived was the fear George had of people saying Walpole was the Queen's Minister, not the King's, and suggesting that the King's policy was ruled by his wife. Now that the Queen was gone, George would be glad to prove to the world that Walpole had always been his Minister, and that he retained Walpole's services because he himself valued them, and not because they had been pressed upon him by a woman. Hervey proved to be right.

Walpole, however, was for strengthening himself after the old fashion. He was determined to put the King into the hands of some woman who would play into the hands of the Minister. The Duke of Grafton and the Duke of Newcastle tried to persuade Walpole to make use of the influence of the Princess Emily. They insisted that she was sure to succeed to the management of the King, but that if Walpole approached her at once he might easily make her believe that she owed it all to him, and that she might thus be induced to stand by him and to assist him. Walpole would have nothing of the kind. He only believed in the ruling power of a mistress now that the Queen was gone. He gave his opinions in his blunt, characteristic way. He meant, he said, to bring over Madame de Walmoden, and would have nothing to do with "the girls." "I was for the wife against the mistress, but I will be for the mistress against the daughters." Accordingly he



earnestly advised the King not to fret any longer with a vain sorrow, but to try to distract himself from grief, and urged him, for this purpose, to send over at once to Hanover for Madame Walmoden. Walpole's way of talking to the young Princesses would seem absolutely beyond belief if we did not know that the reports of it are true. He told the Princesses that they must try to divert their father's melancholy by bringing women round him; he talked of Madame Walmoden, and repeated to them what he had said to Lord Hervey, that, though he had been for the Queen against Lady Suffolk and every other woman, yet now he would be for Madame Walmoden, and advised them in the meantime to bring Lady Deloraine, a former mistress, to their father, adding with brutal indecency that "people must wear old gloves until they get new ones." He offended and disgusted the Princesses Caroline and Emily, and they hated him for ever after. Walpole did not much care. He was not thinking much about "the girls," as he called them. He believed he saw his way.

## CHAPTER XXX

### THE WESLEYAN MOVEMENT

IN 1738 John Wesley returned to London from Georgia, in British North America. He had been absent more than two years. He had gone to Georgia to propagate the faith to which he was devoted; to convert the native Indians and to regenerate the British colonists. He did not accomplish much in either way. The colonists preferred to live their careless, joyous, often dissolute lives, and the stern spirit of Wesley had no charm for them. The Indians refused to be Christianised; one chief giving as his reason for the refusal a melancholy fact which has kept others as well as him from conversion to the true faith. He said he did not want to become a Christian because the Christians in Savannah got drunk, told lies, and beat men and women. Wesley had, before leaving England, founded a small

religious brotherhood, and on his return he at once set to work to strengthen and enlarge it.

John Wesley was in every sense a remarkable man. If any one in the modern world can be said to have had a distinct religious mission, Wesley certainly can be thus described. He was born in 1703 at Epworth, in Lincolnshire. John Wesley came of a family distinguished for its churchmen and ministers. His father was a clergyman of the Church of England, and rector of the parish of Epworth; his grandfather was also a clergyman, but became a Nonconformist minister, and seems to have been a good deal persecuted for his opinions on religious discipline. John Wesley's father was a sincere and devout man, with a certain literary repute and well read in theology, but of narrow mind and dogmatic, unyielding temper. The right of King William to the throne was an article of faith with him, and it came on him one day with the shock of a terrible surprise that his wife did not altogether share his conviction. He vowed that he would never live with her again unless or until she became of his way of thinking; and he straightway left the house; nor did he return to his home and his wife until after the death of the King, when the controversy might be considered as having closed. The King died so soon, however, that the pair were only separated for about a year; but it may fairly be assumed that, had the King lived twenty years, Wesley would not have returned to his wife unless she had signified to him that she had renounced her pestilent scepticism.

The same stern strength of resolve which Wesley, the father, showed in this extraordinary course was shown by the son at many a grave public crisis in his career. The birth of John Wesley was the result of the reconciliation between the elder Wesley and his wife. There were other children, elder and younger; one of whom, Charles, became in after-life the faithful companion and colleague of his brother. John and Charles Wesley were educated at Oxford, and were distinguished there by the fervour of their religious zeal and the austerity of their lives. There were other young men there at the time who grew into close affinity with the Wesleys. There was George Whitefield, the son of a Gloucester innkeeper, who at one time

was employed as a drawer in his mother's taproom; and there was James Hervey, afterwards author of the flowery and sentimental "Meditations," that became for a while so famous—a book which Southey describes as "laudable in purpose and vicious in style." These young men, with others, formed a sort of little religious association or companionship of their own. They used to hold meetings for their mutual instruction and improvement in religious faith and life. They shunned all amusement and all ordinary social intercourse. They were ridiculed and laughed at, and various nicknames were bestowed on them. One of these nicknames they accepted and adopted; as the Flemish *Gueux* had done, and many another religious sect and political party as well. Those who chose to laugh at them saw especial absurdity in their formal and methodical way of managing their spiritual exercises and their daily lives. The jesters dubbed them Methodists; Wesley and his friends welcomed the title; and the fame of the Methodists now folds in the orb of the earth.

Wesley and his friends had in the beginning, and for long years after, no idea whatever of leaving the fold of the English Church. They had as little thought of that kind as in a later generation had the men who made the Free Church of Scotland. Probably their ideas were very vague in their earlier years. They were young men tremendously in earnest; they were aflame in spirit and conscience with religious zeal; and they saw that the Church of England was not doing the work that might have been and ought to have been expected of her. She had ceased utterly to be a missionary Church. She troubled herself in no wise about spreading the glad tidings of salvation among the heathen. At home she was absolutely out of touch with the great bulk of the people. The poor and the ignorant were left quietly to their own resources. The clergymen of the Church of England were not indeed by any means a body of men wanting in personal morality, or even in religious feeling, but they had little or no religious activity because they had little or no religious zeal. They performed perfunctorily their perfunctory duties; and that as a rule was all they did.



Atterbury, Burnet, Swift, all manner of writers, who were themselves ministering in the Church of England, unite in bearing testimony to the torpid condition into which the Church had fallen. Decorum seemed to be the highest reach of the spiritual lives of most of the clergy. One finds curious confirmation of the statements made publicly by men like Atterbury and Burnet in some of the appeals privately made by Swift to his powerful friends for the promotion of poor and deserving clergymen whose poverty and merit had been brought under his notice. The recommendation generally begins and ends in the fact that each particular man had led a decent, respectable life; that he was striving to bring up honestly a large family; and that his living or curacy was not enough to maintain him in comfort. We hardly ever hear of the work which the good man had been doing among the poor, the ignorant, and the sinful. Swift has said many hard and even terrible things about bishops and deans, and vicars and curates. But these stern accusations do not form anything like as formidable a testimony against the condition into which the Church had fallen as will be found in the exceptional praise which he gives to those whom he specially desires to recommend for promotion; and in the fact that the highest reach of that praise comes to nothing more than the assurance that the man had led a decent life, had a large family, and was very poor. Such a recommendation as that would not have counted for much with John Wesley. He would have wanted to know what work the clergyman had done outside his own domestic life; what ignorance had he enlightened, what sinners had he brought to repentance.

Things were still worse in the Established Church of Ireland. Hardly a pastor of that Church could speak three words of the language of the Irish people. Lord Stanhope, in his "History of England from the Peace of Utrecht," writes as if the Irish clergymen—the clergymen, that is, of the Established Church of Ireland—might have done wonders in the way of converting the Irish peasantry to Protestantism if they only could have preached and controverted in the Irish language. We are convinced that they could have done nothing of the kind. The Irish

Celtic population is in its very nature a Catholic population. Not all the preaching since Adam could have made them other than that. Still it struck John Wesley very painfully later on that the effort was never made, and that the men who could not talk to the Irish people in their own tongue, and who did not take the trouble to learn the language, were not in a promising condition for the conversion of souls. The desire of Wesley and his brother, and Whitefield and the rest, seems only at first to have been an awakening of the Church in these islands to a sense of her duty. They do not appear to have had any very far-reaching hopes or plans. They saw that the work was left undone, and they laboured to bring about a spirit which should lead men to the doing of it. At first they only held their little meetings on each succeeding Sunday; but they found themselves warming to the task, and they began to meet and confer very often. Their one thought was how to get at the people; how to get at the lowly, the ignorant, and the poor. Soon they began to see that the lowly, the ignorant, and the poor would not come to the Church, and that, therefore, the Church must go out to them. In a day much nearer to our own a prelate of the Established Church indulged in a very unlucky and unworthy sneer at the expense of the first Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster. He called him an "Archbishop of the slums." The retort was easy and conclusive. It was an admission. "Exactly; that is just what I am. I am an Archbishop of the slums; that is my business; that is what I desire to be. My ministry is among the hovels and the garrets and the slums; yours, I admit, is something very different."

This illustrates to the life the central idea which was forming itself gradually and slowly into shape in the mind of John Wesley and in the minds of his associates. They saw that archbishops of the slums were the very prelates whom England needed. Their souls revolted against the apparently accepted idea that the duties of a priest of the Church of England were fulfilled by the preaching of a chill, formal, written sermon once a week, and the attendance on court ceremonials, and the dining at the houses of those who would then have been called "the great."

An institution which could do no more and strove to do no more than the Church of England was then doing did not seem to them to deserve the name of a Church. It was simply a branch of the Civil Service of the State. But Wesley and his brother, and Whitefield and the rest, fully believed at first that they could do something to quicken the Church into a real, a beneficent, and a religious activity. Most of them had for a long time a positive horror of open-air preaching and of the co-operation of lay preachers. Most of them for a long time clung to all the traditional forms and even formulas amid which they had grown up. What Wesley and the others did not see at first, or for long after, was that the Church of England was not then equal to the work which ought to have been hers. A great change was coming over the communities and the population of England. Small hamlets were turning into large towns. Great new manufacturing industries were creating new classes of working men. Coal mines were gathering together vast encampments of people where a little time before there had been idle heath or lonely hillside. The Church of England, with her then hide-bound constitution and her traditional ways, was not equal to the new burdens which she was supposed to undertake. She suffered also from that lack of competition which is hurtful to so many institutions. The Church of Rome had been suppressed for the time in this country, and the most urgent means had been employed to keep the Dissenters down; therefore the Church of England had grown contented, sleek, inert, and was no longer equal to its work. This fact began after a while to impress itself more and more on the minds of the little band who worked with John Wesley. They resisted the idea to the very last; they hoped and believed and dreamed that they might still be part of the Church of England. They found themselves drawn outside the Church, and they found, too, that, when once they had gone even a very little way out of the fold, the gates were rudely closed against them, and they might not return. It was not that Wesley and his associates left the Church of England. The Church would not have them, because they would persist in doing the



work to which she would not even attempt to put a hand.

John Wesley had been profoundly impressed by William Law's pious and mystical book, "A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life," which was published in 1729. Law lived in London, and Wesley, who desired to be in frequent intercourse with him, used to walk to and from the metropolis for the purpose. The money he thus saved he gave to the poor. He wore his hair at one time very long in order to save the expense of cutting and dressing it, and thus have more money to give away in charity. He and his little band of associates, whose numbers swelled at one time up to twenty-five, but afterwards dropped down to five, imposed on themselves rules of discipline almost as harsh as those of a monastery of the Trappist order. They fasted every Wednesday and Friday, and they made it a duty to visit the prisons and hospitals. Wesley's father, who was growing old, was very anxious that his son should succeed him in the rectory of Epworth. John would not hear of it. In vain his father pressed and prayed; the son could not see his way in that direction. John Wesley has been blamed by some of his biographers for not accepting the task which his father desired and thought right to impose on him. But no one on earth could understand John Wesley's mission except John Wesley himself. When it was pressed upon him that in the living of Epworth he would have the charge of two thousand souls, he said, "I see not how any man can take care of a hundred." It was pointed out to him that his little band of companions had been growing smaller and smaller; he only answered that he was purifying a fountain and not a stream. The illustration was effective and happy.

The truth is that the tremendous energies of John Wesley could not possibly find employment within the narrow field of work adopted by the Established Church of his day; Wesley was a fighter; he had to go out into the broad living world and do battle there. He had originality as well as energy; he must do his work his own way; he could not be a minister of routine. He soon found it borne in upon him that he must speak to

his fellow-man wherever he could find him. For a long time he held back from the thought of open-air preaching, but now he saw that it must be done. There was a period of his life, he says, when he would have thought the saving of a soul "a sin almost if it had not been done in a church." But from the first moment when he began to preach to crowds in the open air he must have felt that he had found his work at last. His friend and colleague Whitefield, who had more of the genius of an orator than Wesley, had preceded him in this path. One is a little surprised that such men as Wesley and Whitefield should ever have found any difficulty about preaching to a crowd in the open air. The Hill of Mars at Athens listened to an open-air sermon from an apostle, and Whitefield himself observed at a later date that the "Sermon on the Mount is a pretty remarkable precedent of field preaching."

Meanwhile, however, Wesley's father died, and Wesley received an invitation to go out to Georgia with the celebrated General Oglethorpe, the founder and Governor of that settlement, to preach to the Indians and the colonists. He sailed for the new colony on October 14, 1735. He was accompanied by his brother Charles and two other missionaries, and on board the vessel was a small band of men from "the meek Moravian missions." The Moravian sect was then in its earliest working order. It had been founded—or perhaps it would be more fitting to say restored—not many years before, by the enthusiastic and devoted Count von Zinzendorf. Wesley was greatly attracted by the ways and the spiritual life of the Moravians. It is worthy of note that when Count Zinzendorf began the formation or restoration of Moravianism he had as little idea of departing from the fold of the Confession of Augsburg as Wesley had of leaving the Church of England. John Wesley did not, as we have said, accomplish much among the colonists and the Indians. Perhaps his ways were too dogmatic and dictatorial for the colonists. He departed altogether from the Church discipline in some of his religious exercises, while he clung to it pertinaciously in others. He offended local magnates by preaching at them from the pulpit, giving them pretty freely a piece of his mind as to

their conduct and ways of life, and, indeed, turning them to public ridicule with rough and rasping sarcasms. With the Indians he could not do much, if only for the fact that he had to speak to them through an interpreter. The tongue, says Jean Paul Richter, is eloquent only in its own language, and the heart in its own religion. It certainly was not from lack of zeal and energy that Wesley failed to accomplish much among the Indians. He flung himself into the work with all his indomitable spirit and disregard for trouble and pain. One of his biographers tells us that "he exposed himself with the utmost indifference to every change of season and inclemency of weather : snow and hail, storm and tempest, had no effect on his iron body. He frequently lay down on the ground and slept all night with his hair frozen to the earth ; he would swim over rivers with his clothes on and travel till they were dry, and all this without any apparent injury to his health." It is no wonder that Wesley soon began to regard himself as a man specially protected by Divine power. He was deeply, romantically superstitious. He commonly guided his course by opening a page of the Bible and reading the first passage that met his eye. He saw visions ; he believed in omens. He tells us himself of the instantaneous way in which some of his prayers for rescue from danger were answered from above. Those who believe that the work Wesley had to do was really great and beneficent work will hardly feel any regret that such a man should have allowed himself to be governed by such ideas. It was necessary to the tasks he had to execute that he should believe himself to bear a charmed life.

Wesley was very near getting married in Georgia. A clever and pretty young woman in Savannah set herself at him. She consulted him about her spiritual salvation, she dressed always in white because she understood that he liked such simplicity of colour, she nursed him when he was ill. The Governor of the colony favoured the young lady's intentions, which were indeed strictly honourable, being most distinctly matrimonial. At one time it seemed very likely that the marriage would take place, but Wesley's heart was evidently not in the affair. Some of his colleagues



told him plainly enough that they believed the young lady to be merely playing a game, that she put on affection and devotion only that she might put on a wedding-dress. Wesley consulted some of the elders of the Moravian Church, and promised to abide by their decision. Their advice was that he should go no farther with the young woman, and Wesley kept his word and refused to see her any more. She married, soon after, the nephew of a magistrate of the colony, and before long we find Wesley publicly reprehending her for "something in her behaviour of which he disapproved," and threatening even to exclude her from the communion of the Church until she should have signified her sincere repentance. Her family took legal proceedings against him. Wesley did not care. He was about to return to England, and he was called on to give bail for his reappearance in the colony. He contemptuously refused to do anything of the kind, and promptly sailed from Savannah.

This little episode of the Georgian girl is characteristic of the man. He did not care about marrying her, but it did not seem to him a matter of much importance either way, and he doubtless would have married her but that he thought it well to seek the advice of his Moravian friends, and bound himself to abide by their decision. That decision once given, he had no further wavering or doubt, but the course he had taken and the manner in which he had completely thrown over the woman did not prevent him in the least from visiting her with a public rebuke when he saw something in her conduct of which he disapproved. He saw no reason why, because he refused to be her lover, he should fail in his duty as her minister.

We may anticipate a little as to Wesley's personal history. Later in his life he married. He was not happy in his marriage. He took for his wife a widow who plagued him by her narrow-mindedness, her bitterness, and her jealousy. Wesley's care and kindness to the women who came under his ministrations set his wife wild with suspicion and anger. She could not believe that a man could be kind to a woman, even as a pastor, without having evil purpose in his heart. She had the temper of a virago; she stormed

against her husband, she threatened him, she sometimes rushed at him and tore his hair; she repeatedly left his house, but was prevailed upon by him to return. At last after a fierce quarrel she flung out of the house, vowing that she would never come back. Wesley's comment, which he expressed in Latin, was stern and characteristic: "I have not left her, I have not put her away, I will never recall her." He kept his word.

Wesley started on his mission to preach to the people and to pray with them. Whitefield and Charles Wesley did the same. Charles Wesley was the hymn writer, the sweet singer, of the movement. The meetings began to grow larger, more enthusiastic, more impassioned, every day. John Wesley brought to his work "a frame of adamant" as well as "a soul of fire." No danger frightened him, and no labour tired. Rain, hail, snow, storm, were matters of indifference to him when he had any work to do. One reads the account of the toil he could cheerfully bear, the privations he could recklessly undergo, the physical obstacles he could surmount, with what would be a feeling of incredulity were it possible to doubt the unquestionable evidence of a whole cloud of heterogeneous witnesses. Not Mark Antony, not Charles the Twelfth, not Napoleon, ever went through such physical suffering for the love of war, or for the conqueror's ambition, as Wesley was accustomed to undergo for the sake of preaching at the right time and in the right place to some crowd of ignorant and obscure men, the conversion of whom could bring him neither fame nor fortune.

All the phenomena with which we have been familiar in modern times of what are called "revivalist" meetings were common among the congregations to whom Wesley preached. Women especially were affected in this way. They raved, shrieked, struggled, flung themselves on the ground, fainted, cried out that they were possessed by evil spirits. Wesley rather encouraged these manifestations, and indeed quite believed in their genuineness. No doubt for the most part they were genuine; that is, they were the birth of hysterical, highly strung natures, stimulated into something like epilepsy or temporary insanity by the

unbearable oppression of a wholly novel excitement. No such evidences of emotion were ever given in the parish church where the worthy clergyman read his duly prepared or perhaps thoughtfully purchased sermon. Sometimes a new form of hysteria possessed some of Wesley's congregations, and irrepressible peals of laughter broke from some of the brethren and sisters, who declared that they were forced to it by Satan. Wesley quite accepted this explanation, and so did most of his companions. Two ladies, however, refused to believe, and insisted that "any one might help laughing if she would." But very soon after these two sceptics were seized with the very same sort of irrepressible laughter. They continued for two days laughing almost without cessation, "a spectacle to all," as Wesley tells, "and were then upon prayer made for them delivered in a moment." It is almost needless now to say that bursts of irrepressible laughter are among the commonest forms of hysterical excitement.

The cooler common sense of Charles Wesley, however, saw these manifestations with different eyes. He felt sure that there was sometimes a good deal of affectation in them, and he publicly remonstrated with some women who, as it appeared to him, were needlessly making themselves ridiculous. He was probably right in these instances: the instinct of imitation is so strong among men and women that every genuine outburst of maniacal excitement is sure to be followed by some purely mimetic efforts of a similar demonstration. The novelty of the whole movement was enough to account for the genuine and the sham hysterics. It was an entirely new experience then for English men and women of the humblest class, and of that generation, to be addressed in great open-air masses by renowned and powerful preachers. Whitefield's first great effort at field-preaching was made for the benefit of the colliers at Kingswood, near Bristol. Before many weeks had gone by, he could gather round him some twenty thousand of these men. Whitefield had a marvellous fervour and force of oratory. His voice, his gestures, his sudden and startling appeals, his solemn pauses, the dramatic and even theatric energy which he threw into his



attitudes and his action, his flights of lofty and sustained declamation, contrasting with sentences of homely colloquialism, were overwhelming in their effect on such an audience. "The first discovery," he says himself, "of their being affected was to see the white gutters made by their tears, which plentifully fell down their cheeks, black as they came out of the coal pits." It was not only miners and other illiterate men whom Whitefield impressed by the fervour and passion of his eloquence. Hume, Benjamin Franklin, Horace Walpole, and other men as well qualified to judge, and as little likely to fall under the spell of religious or sentimental enthusiasm, have borne willing testimony to the irresistible power of a sermon from Whitefield.

Wesley and Whitefield did not remain long in spiritual companionship. They could not agree as to the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination. Wesley was opposed to the doctrine; Whitefield willing to accept it. They discussed and discussed the question, but without drawing any nearer together. Indeed, as might naturally have been expected, they only fell more widely asunder, and after a while the difference of opinion grew to something like a personal estrangement. Wesley had already broken away from spiritual communion with some of his old friends, the Moravians. Probably he felt all the stronger for his own work now that he stood as a leader all but alone. He walked his own wild road; Whitefield took a path for himself. Wesley soon found that he was gaining more followers than he had lost. He had to adopt the practice of employing lay preachers; it was a matter of necessity to his task. He could not induce many clergymen to work under his guidance and after his fashion. The movement was spreading all over the country. Wesley became the centre and light of his wing of the campaign. The machinery of his organisation was simple and strong. A conference was called together every year, which was composed of preachers selected by Wesley. These formed his cabinet or central board, and lent their authority to his decisions.

This was the germ of the great Wesleyan organisation,

which has since become so powerful, and has spread itself so widely over Great Britain and the American States. The preachers were sent by Wesley from one part of the country to another, just as he thought best ; and it never occurred to any missionary to refuse, remonstrate, or even delay. The system was admirable ; the discipline was perfect. Wesley was as completely in command of his body of missionaries as the general of the order of Jesuits is of those over whom he is called to exercise control. The humblest of the Wesleyan preachers caught something, caught indeed very much, of the energy, the courage, the devotion, the self-sacrifice, of their great leader. No doubt there were many errors and offences here and there. Good taste, sobriety of judgment, prudence, common sense, were now and then offended. Most of the preachers were ignorant men, who had nothing but an untaught enthusiasm and a rude, uncouth eloquence to carry them on. They had to preach to multitudes very often more ignorant and uncouth than themselves. It would be absolutely impossible under such conditions that there should not sometimes be offence, and, as Hamlet says, "much offence too." But there was no greater departure from the lines of propriety and good taste than any one who took a reasonable view of the whole work and its workers must have expected to find.

Of course a strong opposition to the movement showed itself in many parts of the country. The Wesleyans were denounced ; they were ridiculed ; they were caricatured ; they were threatened ; they were set upon by ruffians ; they were stoned by mobs. In some places it was said that the local magistrates actually connived at the attempt to drive them out by force. Projects are declared to have been formed for their complete extermination. Such projects, however, do not succeed. No amount of violence has ever yet exterminated religious zeal and impassioned, even let it be fanatical, enthusiasm. John Wesley went his way undismayed. He even appears to have positively enjoyed the excitement and the danger. The persecution began after a while to languish in its efforts, and the Wesleyans kept growing more and more numerous and strong. But the movement in growing grew away from the Church of

England. Wesley had been drawn out of his original intent step after step. He could not help himself, once his movement had been started. He had had to take to field-preaching, for the good reason that he could not otherwise reach the people whom it was his heart's warmest longing to reach. He had to take to employing lay preachers, because without them he could not have got his preaching done. At last he began to ordain ministers, and even it is said bishops, for the missions in America. He had, in fact, broken away altogether from the discipline of the Church of England, although he persisted to his dying day that he never had any design of separating from the Church, "and have no such design now." Near to the close of his long life he declared, "I live and die a member of the Church of England, and none who regard my judgment or advice will ever separate from it." No one can doubt that Wesley spoke in full sincerity. When he stepped outside the pale of Church practice it was only to do what he believed ought to have been the work of the Church itself, but which the Church did not then care to attempt, and which, as he felt convinced, could not afford to wait for the indefinite time when the Church might have the spirit, the energy, and the resources needed for such an undertaking.

Wesley was a thorough despot ; as much of a despot as Peter the Great or Napoleon. He took no trouble to disguise his despotic purpose. He did not shelter himself, as Napoleon once wished to do, under the draperies of a constitutional king. Wesley was satisfied in his own mind that he knew better than any other man how to guide his movements and govern his followers, and he told people that he knew it, and acted accordingly. The members of his conference, or what we have called his cabinet, were only like Clive's council of war ; Wesley listened to their advice and their arguments, but acted according to his own judgment all the same. Late in his career it was charged against him that he was trying to turn himself into a sort of Methodist pope. He asked for some explanation of this, and was told that he had invested himself with arbitrary power. His answer was simple and straightforward. "If



by arbitrary power you mean a power which I exercise singly, without any colleagues therein, this is certainly true; but I see no hurt in it." All the actions of his life show this complete faith in himself where the business of his mission was concerned. He was dogmatic, masterful, overbearing, very often far from amiable, sometimes all but unendurable, to those around him. But if he had not had these peculiar qualities or defects he would not have been the man that he was; he would not have been able to bear the charge of such a task at such a time. It is probable that Hannibal did not cut through the Alps with vinegar; it is certain that he could not have pierced his way with honey.

Nothing can better show than the rise and progress of the great Methodist movement how vast is the difference between a people and what is commonly called society. In society everywhere throughout England, in the great provincial cities as well as in the capital, religion seemed to have completely gone out of fashion. The court cared nothing about it. The King had no real belief in his heart; he had as little faith in Divine guidance as he had in the honour of man or the chastity of woman. The Queen's devotional exercises were nothing but a mere performance carried on sometimes through a half-opened door, the attendant minister on one side of the door and the gossiping, chattering ladies on the other. The leading statesmen of the age were avowedly indifferent or professedly unbelieving. Bolingbroke was a preacher of unbelief. Walpole never seems to have cared to turn his thoughts for one moment to anything higher than his own political career, the upholding of his friends if they stood fast by him, and the downfall of his enemies. Chesterfield was not exactly the sort of man to be stirred into spiritual life. Morals were getting out of fashion as much as religion. Society had all the grossness without much of the wit which belonged to the days of the Restoration. Yet the mere fact that the Wesleyan movement made such sudden way among the poor and the lowly shows beyond question that the heart of the English people had not been corrupted. Conscience was asleep, but it was not dead.

The first words of Wesley seemed to quicken it into a new life.

We have somewhat anticipated the actual course of events in order to show at once what the Wesleyan movement came to. During the lifetime of its founder it had grown into a great national and international institution. Since his time it has been spreading and growing all over the world where Christianity grows. It is the severest in its discipline of all the Protestant Churches, and yet it exercises a charm even over gentle and tender natures, and makes them its willing servants, while it teaches the wilder and fiercer spirits to bend their natures and tame their wild passions down. In the United States of America Wesleyanism is now one of the most popular and powerful of all the denominations of Christianity. It has since been divided up into many sections, both here and there, on questions of discipline and even on questions of belief; but in its leading characteristics it has been faithful to the main purpose of its founder. Its success did not consist mainly in what it accomplished for its own people; it achieved a great work also by the impulse it gave to the Church of England. That Church for a while seemed to be filled with a reviving spiritual and ministerial activity. It appeared to take shame to itself that it had remained so long apathetic and perfunctory, and it flung itself into competition with the younger and more energetic mission. The English Church did not indeed retain this mood of ardour and of eagerness very long. After a time it relapsed into comparative inactivity; and a new and very different movement was needed at a period much nearer to our own to make it once again a ministering power to the people—to the poor. But for the time the revival of the Church was genuine and was beneficent. With the quickened religious vitality of the Wesleyan movement came also a quickened philanthropic spirit; a zeal for the instruction, the purification, and the better life of men and women. The common instinct of humanity always is to strive for higher and better ways of living, if only once the word of guidance is given and the soul of true manhood is roused to the work. Indeed there is not much about this period of

English history concerning which the modern Englishman can feel really proud except that great religious revival which began with the thoughts and the teachings of John Wesley. One turns in relief from the partisan struggles in Parliament and out of it, from the intrigues and counter-intrigues of selfish and perfidious statesmen and the *alcove* conspiracies of worthless women, to Wesley and his religious visions, to Whitefield and his colliers, to Charles Wesley and his sweet devotional hymns. Many of us are unable to have any manner of sympathy with the precise doctrines and the forms of faith which Wesley taught. But the man must have no sympathy with faith or religious feeling of any kind who does not recognise the unspeakable value of that great reform which Wesley and Whitefield introduced to the English people. They taught moral doctrines which we all accept in common, but they did not teach them after the cold and barren way of the plodding, mechanical instructor. They thundered them into the opening ears of thousands who had never been roused to moral sentiment before. They inspired the souls of poor and commonplace creatures with all the zealot's fire and all the martyr's endurance. They brought tears to penitent eyes which had never been moistened before by any but the selfish sense of personal pain or grief. They pierced through the dull, vulgar, contaminated hideousness of low and vicious life, and sent streaming in upon it the light of a higher world and a better law. Every new Wesleyan became a missionary of Wesleyanism. The son converted the father, the daughter won over the heart of the mother. There was much that was hard, much that was fierce, in the doctrine and the discipline of Methodism, but that time was not one in which gentler teachings could much prevail. Men and women had to be startled into a sense of the need of their spiritual regeneration. Wesley and the comrades who worked with him in the beginning, and with some of whom, like Whitefield, he ceased after a while to work, were just the men needed to call aloud to the people and make sure that their voices must be heard. They had to talk in a shout if they were to talk to any purpose. There was much in their style of eloquence against which a



pure and cultured criticism would naturally protest. But they did not speak for the pure and cultured criticism. They came to call ignorant sinners to repentance. They have the one great abiding merit, they have the one enduring fame—that they saw their real business in life; that they kept to it through whatever disadvantage, pain, and danger; and that they accomplished what they had gone out to do. Their monument lives to-day in the living history of England and of America.

## CHAPTER XXXI

### ENGLAND'S HONOUR AND JENKINS'S EAR

"MADAM, there are fifty thousand men slain this year in Europe, and not one Englishman among them." This was the proud boast which, as has been already mentioned, Walpole was able to make to Queen Caroline not very long before her death, when she was trying to stir him up to a more aggressive policy in the affairs of the Continent. Walpole's words sound almost like an anticipation of Prince Bismarck's famous declaration that the Eastern Question was not worth to Germany the life of a single Pomeranian grenadier. But Prince Bismarck was more fortunate than Walpole in his policy of peace. He had secured a position of advantage for himself in maintaining that policy which Walpole never had. Prince Bismarck had twice over made it clear to all the world that he could conduct to the most complete success a policy of uncompromising war. Walpole had all the difficulty in keeping to his policy of peace which a statesman always has who is suspected, rightly or wrongly, of a willingness to purchase peace at almost any price. It is melancholy to have to make the statement, but the statement is nevertheless true, that in the England of Walpole's day, and in the England of our own day as well, the statesman who is known to love peace is sure to have it shrieked at him in some crisis that he does not love the honour of his country. A periodical outbreak of the

craving or lust for war seems to be one of the passions and one of the afflictions of almost every great commonwealth in Europe. A wise and just policy may have secured a peace that has lasted for years ; but the mere fact that peace has lasted for years seems to many unthinking people reason enough why the country should be favoured with a taste of war. We are constantly declaring that England is not a military nation, and yet no statesman is ever so popular for the hour in England as the statesman who fires the people with the passion of war. Many a Minister, weak and unpopular in his domestic policy, has suddenly made himself the hero and the darling of the moment by declaring that some foreign State has insulted England, and that the time has come when the sword must be drawn to defend the nation's honour. Then "away to Heaven, respective lenity" indeed ! The appeal acts like a charm to call out the passion and to silence the reason of vast masses of the population in all ranks and conditions. Even among the working classes and the poor, who, one might imagine, have all to lose and nothing to gain by war, it is by no means certain that the war fever will not flame for the hour. There are seasons when, as Burke has said, "even the humblest of us are degraded into the vices and follies of kings."

War had no fascination for Walpole. He saw it only in its desolation, its cruelty, its folly, and its cost. At the time which we have now reached he looked with clear gaze over the European continent, and he saw nothing in the action of foreign Powers which concerned the honour and the interest of England enough to make it necessary for her to draw the sword. But, unfortunately for his country and for his fame, Walpole was not a statesman of firm and lofty principle. He was always willing to come to terms. In the domestic affairs of England he allowed grievances to exist which he had again and again condemned and deplored, and which every one knew he was sincerely desirous to remove ; he allowed them to exist because it might have been a source of annoyance to the King if the Minister had troubled him about such a subject. He acted on this policy with regard to the grievances of which the Dissenters

complained, and, as he always admitted, very justly complained. Much as he detested a policy of war, he was not the Minister who would stand by a policy of peace at the risk of losing his popularity and his power. Much as he loved peace, he loved his place as Prime Minister still more. It is probable that his enemies gave him credit for greater fixity of purpose in regard to his peace policy than he really possessed. They believed, perhaps, that they had only to get up a good, popular war-cry in England, and that Walpole would have to go out of office. They told themselves that he would not make war. On this faith they based their schemes and founded their hopes. It would have been well for Walpole and for England if their belief had been justified by events.

The Patriots raised their war-cry. The honour of England had been insulted. Her claims had been rejected with insolent scorn. Her flag had been trampled on; her seamen had been imprisoned, mutilated, tortured; and all this by whom? By whom, indeed, but the old and implacable enemy of England, the Power which had sent the Armada to invade England's shores and to set up the Inquisition among the English people—by Spain, of course, by Spain! In Spanish dungeons brave Englishmen were wearing out their lives. In mid-ocean English ships were stopped and searched by arrogant officers of the King of Spain. Why did Spain venture on such acts? Because, the Patriots cried out, Spain believed that England's day of strength had gone, and that England could now be insulted with impunity. What wonder, they asked in patriotic passion, if Spain or any other foreign State should believe such things? Was there not a Minister now at the head of affairs in England, now grasping all the various powers of the State in his own hands, who was notoriously willing to put up with any insult, to subject his country to any degradation, rather than venture on even a remonstrance that might lead to war? Let the flag of England be torn down and trailed in the dust—what then? What cared the Minister whose only fear was, not of dishonour, but of danger?

This was the fiery stuff which the Patriots kept flooding



the country with ; which they poured out in speeches and pamphlets and pasquinades and lampoons. Some of them probably came in the end to believe it all themselves. Walpole was assailed every hour—he was held up to public hatred and scorn as if he had betrayed his country. Bolingbroke from his exile contributed his share to the literature of blood, and soon came over from his exile to take a larger share in it. “The Craftsman” ran over with furious diatribes against the Minister of Peace. Caricatures of all kinds represented Walpole abasing himself before Spain and entering into secret engagements with her, to the prejudice and detriment of England. Ballads were hawked and sung through the streets which described Walpole as acknowledging to the Spanish Don that he hated the English merchants and traders just as much as the Don did, and that he was heartily glad when Spain applied her rod to them. The country became roused to the wildest passion ; the Patriots were carrying it all their own way.

What was it all about ? What was Spain doing ? What ought England to do ?

The whole excitement arose out of certain longstanding trade disputes between England and Spain in the New World. These disputes had been referred to in the Treaty of Utrecht, which was supposed to have settled them in 1713 ; and again in the Treaty of Seville, which was believed to have finally settled them in 1729. England had recognised the right of Spain to regulate the trade with Spanish colonies. Spain agreed that England should have the privilege of supplying the Spanish colonies with slaves. This noble privilege English traders exercised to the full. It is not very gratifying to have to recollect that two of England’s great disputes with Spain were about England’s claim to an unlimited right to sell slaves to the Spanish colonies. To England, or at least to the English South Sea Company, was also conceded the permission to send one merchant vessel each year to the South Seas with as much English goods to sell to the Spanish colonies as a ship of 500 tons could carry. As everybody might have expected, the provisions of the treaty were constantly

broken through. The English traders were very eager to sell their goods ; the Spanish colonists were very glad to get them to buy. All other commerce than that in slaves and the one annual shipload of English goods was strictly prohibited by Spain. The whole arrangement now seems in the highest degree artificial and absurd ; but it was not an uncommon sort of international arrangement then. As was to be expected, the English traders set going a huge illicit trade in the South Seas. This was done partly by the old familiar smuggling process, and partly, too, by keeping little fleets of smaller vessels swarming off the coasts and reloading the one legitimate vessel as often as her contents were sent into a port. This ingenious device was said to have been detected by the Spanish authorities in various places. The Spaniards retaliated by stopping and searching English vessels cruising anywhere near the coast of a Spanish colony, and by arresting and imprisoning the officers and sailors of English merchantmen. The Spaniards asserted, and were able in many instances to make their assertions good, that whole squadrons of English trading vessels sometimes entered the Spanish ports under pretence of being driven there by stress of weather, or by the need of refitting and refreshing ; and that, once in the port, they managed to get their cargoes safely ashore. Sometimes, too, it was said, the vessels lay off the shore without going into the harbour ; and then smugglers came off in their long, low, swift boats, and received the English goods and carried them into the port. The fact undoubtedly was that the English merchants were driving a roaring trade with the Spanish colonies ; just as the Spanish authorities might very well have known that they would be certain to do. Where one set of men are anxious to sell, and another set are just as anxious to buy, it needs very rigorous coastguard watching to prevent the goods being sent in and the money taken away.

This fact, however, does not say anything against the right of Spain to enforce, if she could, the conditions of the treaties. On that point Spain was only asserting her indisputable right. But would it be reasonable to expect

that Spain or any other country could endeavour to maintain her right in such a dispute, and under such conditions, without occasional rashness, violence, and injustice on the part of her officials? There can be no doubt that many high-handed and arbitrary acts were done against English subjects by the officers of Spanish authority. On every real, and every reported, and every imaginary act of Spanish harshness the Patriots seized with avidity. They presented petitions, moved for papers, moved that this injured person and that be allowed to appear and state his case at the bar of the House of Commons. Some English sailors and other Englishmen were thus allowed to appear at the bar, and did make statements of outrage and imprisonment. Some of these statements were doubtless true, some were probably exaggerated; the men who made them were not on oath; there was every temptation to exaggerate, because it had become apparently the duty of every true patriot who loved old England to believe anything said by anybody against Spain. The same sort of thing has happened again and again in times nearer to our own, where some class of English traders have been trying to carry on a forbidden traffic with the subjects of a foreign sovereign. We see the same things, now in China, and now in Burmah; dress goods in one place, opium in another, slaves in another; reckless smuggling by the traders, overdone reprisals by the authorities; and then we hear the familiar appeal to England not to allow her sons to be insulted and imprisoned by some insolent foreign Power.

Walpole was not inclined to allow English subjects to be molested with impunity. But he saw no reason to believe that Spain intended anything of the kind. The advices he received from the British Minister at the Spanish court spoke rather of delays and slow formalities, and various small disputes and misunderstandings, than of wilful denial of justice. Walpole felt satisfied that by putting a little diplomatic pressure on the proceedings every satisfaction fairly due to England and English subjects could be obtained. He, therefore, refused for a long time to allow his hand to be forced by the Opposition, and was full of



hope that the good sense of the country in general would sustain him against the united strength of his enemies, as it had so often done before.

Walpole did not know how strong his enemies were this time. He did not know what a capital cry they had got ; what a powerful appeal to national passion they could put into voice ; and what a loud reply the national passion would make to the appeal. On Saturday, March 2, 1738, a petition was presented to the House of Commons from divers merchants, planters, and others, trading to, and interested in, the British plantations in America. The petition was presented by Mr. Perry, one of the representatives of London, and an alderman of the City. The petition set forth a long history of the alleged grievances, and of the denial of redress, and prayed the House to "provide such timely and adequate remedy for putting an end to all insults and depredations on them, and their fellow subjects, as to the House shall seem meet, as well as procure such relief for the unhappy sufferers as the nature of the case and the justice of their cause may require ; and that they may be heard by themselves and counsel thereupon."

On the same day several other petitions from cities, and from private individuals, were presented on the same subject. The debate on Mr. Perry's motion mainly turned, at first, on the minor question, whether the House would admit the petitioners to be heard by themselves and also by counsel, or, according to the habit of the House, by themselves or counsel. Yet, short and almost formal as the debate might have been, the opponents of the Government contrived to import into it a number of assumptions, and an amount of passion, such as the earlier stages of a difficult and delicate international dispute are seldom allowed to exhibit. Even so cautious and respectable a man as Sir John Barnard, a typical English merchant of the highest class, did not hesitate to speak of the grievances as if they were all established and admitted, and the action of Spain as a wilful outrage upon the trade, the honour, and the safety of Great Britain. Walpole argued that the petitioners should be heard by

themselves and not by counsel ; but the main object of his speech was to appeal to the House not to "work upon the passions where the head is to be informed." Mr. Robert Wilmot thereupon arose, and replied in an oration belonging to that "spread-eagle" order which is familiar to American political controversy. "Talk of working on the passions," this orator exclaimed ; "can any man's passions be wound up to a greater height, can any man's indignation be more raised, than every free-born Briton's must be when he reads a letter which I have received this morning, and which I have now in my hand? This letter, sir, gives an account that seventy of our brave sailors are now in chains in Spain. Our countrymen in chains, and slaves to Spaniards ! Is not this enough to fire the coldest ? Is not this enough to rouse all the vengeance of a national resentment ? Shall we sit here debating about words and forms while the sufferings of our countrymen call out loudly for redress ?"

Pulteney himself, when speaking on the general question, professed, indeed, not to assume the charges in the petitions to be true before they had been established, but he proceeded to deal with them on something very like a positive assumption that they would be established. Thereupon he struck the key-note of the whole outcry that was to be raised against the Ministry. Could any one believe, he indignantly asked, that the court of Spain "would have presumed to trifle in such a manner with any Ministry but one which they thought wanted either courage or inclination to resent such treatment ?" He accused the Ministry of "a scandalous breach of duty" and "the most infamous pusillanimity." Later in the same day Sir John Barnard moved an address to the Crown, asking for papers to be laid before the House. Walpole did not actually oppose the motion, and only suggested a modification of it, but he earnestly entreated the House not, at that moment, to press the Sovereign for a publication of the latest despatches. He went so far as to let the House understand that the latest reply from Spain was not satisfactory, and that it might be highly injurious to the prospects of peace if it were then to be given to the world ; and he pointed to the

obvious fact that "when once a paper is read in this House the contents of it cannot be long a secret to the world." The King, he said, had still good hopes of being able to prevail on Spain to make an honourable and ample reparation for any wrongs that might have been done to Englishmen. "We ought," Walpole pleaded, "to wait, at least, till his Majesty shall tell us from the throne that all our hopes of obtaining satisfaction are over. Then it will be time enough to declare for a war with Spain." Unfortunately, Walpole went on to a mode of argument which was, of all others, the best calculated to give his enemies an advantage over him. His language was strong and clear; his sarcasm was well merited; but the time was not suited for an appeal to such very calm common sense as that to which the great Minister was trying in vain to address himself. "The topic of national resentment for national injury affords," Walpole said, "a fair field for declamation; and, to hear gentlemen speak on that head, one would be apt to believe that victory and glory are bound to attend the resolutions of our Parliament and the efforts of our arms. But gentlemen ought to reflect that there are many instances in the history of the world, and some in the annals of England, which prove that conquest is not always inseparable from the justest cause or most exalted courage."

The hearts of the Patriots must have rejoiced when they heard such an argument from the lips of Walpole. For what did it amount to? Only this—that this un-English Minister, this unworthy servant of the Crown, positively admitted into his own mind the idea that there was any possibility of England's being worsted in any war with any State or any number of States! Fancy any one allowing such a thought to remain for an instant in his mind! As if it were not a settled thing, specially arranged by Providence, that one Englishman is a match for, at least, any six Spaniards, Frenchmen, or other contemptible foreigners! Walpole's great intellectual want was the lack of imagination. If he had possessed more imagination, he would have been not only a greater orator, but a greater debater. He would have seen more clearly the effect of an argument



on men with minds and temperaments unlike his own. In this particular instance the appeal to what he would have considered cool common sense was utterly damaging to him. Pulteney pounced on him at once. "From longer forbearance," he exclaimed, "we have everything to fear; from acting vigorously we have everything to hope." He admitted that a war with Spain was to be avoided, if it could be avoided with honour; but, he asked, "will it ever be the opinion of an English statesman that, in order to avoid inconvenience, we are to embrace a dishonour? Where is the brave man," he demanded, "who in a just cause will submissively lie down under insults? No!—in such a case he will do all that prudence and necessity dictate in order to procure satisfaction, and leave the rest to Providence." Pulteney spoke with undisguised contempt of the sensitive honour of the Spanish people. "I do not see," he declared—and this was meant as a keen personal thrust at Walpole—"how we can comply with the forms of Spanish punctilio without sacrificing some of the essentials of British honour. Let gentlemen but consider whether our Prince's and our country's honour is not as much engaged to revenge our injuries as the honour of the Spaniards can be to support their insolence." There never, probably, was a House of Commons so cool-headed and cautious as not to be stirred out of reason and into passion by so well-contrived an appeal. The appeal was followed up by others. "Perhaps," Sir William Wyndham said, "if we lose the character of being good fighters, we shall, at least, gain that of being excellent negotiators." But he would not leave to Walpole the full benefit of even that doubtful change of character. "The character of a mere negotiator," he insisted, "had never been affected by England without her losing considerably, both in her interest at home and her influence abroad. This truth will appear plainly to any one who compares the figure this nation made in Europe under Queen Elizabeth with the figure she made under her successor, King James the First. The first never treated with an insulting enemy; the other never durst break with a treacherous friend. The first thought it her glory to command peace; the

other thought it no dishonour to beg it. In her reign every treaty was crowned with glory; in his no peace was attended with tranquillity; in short, her care was to improve, his to depress the true British spirit." Even the cool-headed and wise Sir John Barnard cried out that "a dishonourable peace is worse than a destructive war."

We need not go through all the series of debates in the Lords and Commons. It is enough to say that every one of these debates made the chances of a peaceful arrangement grow less and less. The impression of the Patriots seemed to be that Walpole was to be held responsible for every evasion, every delay, every rash act, and every denial of justice on the part of Spain. With this conviction, it was clear to them that, the more they attacked the Spanish Government, the more they attacked and damaged Walpole. Full of this spirit, therefore, they launched out in every debate about Spanish treachery, and Spanish falsehood, and Spanish cruelty, and Spanish religious faith, in a manner that might have seemed deliberately designed to render a peaceful settlement of any question impossible between England and Spain. Yet we do not believe that the main object of the Patriots was to force England into a war with Spain. Their main object was to force Walpole out of office. They were for a long time under the impression that he would resign rather than make war. Once he resigned, the Patriots would very soon abate their war fury, and try whether the quarrel might not be settled in peace with honour. But they had allowed themselves to be driven too far along the path of war; and they had not taken account of the fact that the great Peace Minister might, after all, prefer staying in office and making war to going out of office and leaving some rival to make it.

Suddenly there came to the aid of the Patriots and their policy the portentous story of Captain Jenkins and his ear. Captain Jenkins had sailed on board his vessel the *Rebecca* from Jamaica for London; and off the coast of Havannah he was boarded by a revenue cutter of Spain, which proceeded to subject him and his vessel to the right of search. Jenkins declared that he had been fearfully maltreated; that the Spanish officers had him hanged up at the yard-

arm and cut down when he was half-dead ; that they slashed at his head with their cutlasses and hacked his left ear nearly off ; and that, to complete the measure of their outrages, one of them actually tore off his bleeding ear, flung it in his face, and bade him carry it home to his King and tell him what had been done. To this savage order Jenkins reported that he was ready with a reply : " I commend," he said, " my soul to God, and my cause to my country "—a very eloquent and telling little sentence, which gives good reason to think of what Jenkins could have done after preparation in the House of Commons if he could throw off such rhetoric unprepared, and in spite of the disturbing effect of having just been half-hanged and much mutilated. Jenkins showed indeed remarkable presence of mind in every way. He prudently brought home the severed ear with him, and invited all patriotic Englishmen to look at it. Scepticism itself could not, for a while at all events, refuse to believe that the Spaniards had cut off Jenkins's ear, when, behold ! there was the ear itself to tell the story. Later on, indeed, scepticism did begin to assert herself. Were there not other ways, it was asked, by which Englishmen might have lost an ear as well as by the fury of the hateful Spaniards ? Were there not British pillories ? Whether Jenkins sacrificed his ear to the cause of his country abroad or to the criminal laws of his country at home, it seems to be quite settled now that his story was a monstrous exaggeration, if not a pure invention. Burke has distinctly stigmatised it as " the fable of Jenkins's ear." The fable, however, did its work for that time. It was eagerly caught up and believed in ; people wanted to believe in it, and the ear was splendid evidence. The mutilation of Jenkins played much the same part in England that the fabulous insult of the King of Prussia to the French envoy played in the France of 1870. The eloquence of Pulteney, the earnestness of Wyndham, the intriguing genius of Bolingbroke, seemed only to have been agencies to prepare the way for the triumph of Jenkins and his severed ear. The outcry all over the country began to make Walpole feel at last that something would have to be done. His own constitutional policy came against him in



this difficulty. He had broken the power of the House of Lords and had strengthened that of the House of Commons. The hereditary chamber might perhaps be relied upon to stand firmly against a popular clamour ; but it would be impossible to expect such firmness at such a time from an elective assembly of almost any sort. In this instance, however, Walpole found himself worse off in the House of Lords than even in the House of Commons. The House of Lords was stimulated by the really powerful eloquence of Carteret and of Chesterfield, and there was no man on the ministerial side of the House who could stand up with any effect against such accomplished and unscrupulous political gladiators.

Walpole appealed to the Parliament not to take any step which would render a peaceful settlement impossible, and he promised to make the most strenuous efforts to obtain a prompt consideration of England's claims. He set to work energetically for this purpose. His difficulties were greatly increased by the unfriendly conduct of the Spanish envoy, who was on terms of confidence with the Patriots, and went about everywhere declaring that Walpole was trying to deceive the English people as well as the Spanish Government. It must have needed all Walpole's strength of will to sustain him against so many difficulties and so many enemies at such a crisis. It had not been his way to train up statesmen to help him in his work, and now he stood almost alone.

The negotiations were further complicated by the disputes between England and Spain as to the right of English traders to cut logwood in Campeachy Bay, and as to the settlement of the boundaries of the new English colonies of Florida and Carolina in North America, and the rival claims of England and Spain to this or that strip of border territory. Sometimes, when an international dispute has to be glossed over rather than settled to the full satisfaction of either party, it is found a convenient thing for diplomatists to have a great many subjects of disputation wrapped up in one arrangement. Walpole was sincerely anxious to give Spain a last chance ; but the Spanish people on their side were stirred to bitterness and to

passion by the vehement denunciations of the English Opposition. Even then, when daily papers were little known to the population of either London or Madrid, people in London and in Madrid did somehow get to know that there had been fierce exchange of international dislike and defiance. Walpole still clung to his policy of peace, and his influence in the House of Commons was commanding enough to get his proposals accepted there. In the House of Lords the Ministry were nowhere in debate. Something, indeed, should be said for Lord Hervey, who had been raised to the Upper House as Baron Hervey of Ickworth in 1733, and who made some speeches full of clear good sense and sound moderating argument in support of Walpole's policy. But Carteret and Chesterfield would have been able in any case to overwhelm the Duke of Newcastle, and the Duke of Newcastle now was turning traitor to Walpole. Stupid as Newcastle was, he was beginning to see that the day of Walpole's destiny was nearly over; and he was taking measures to act accordingly. All that Newcastle could do as Secretary for Foreign Affairs was done to make peace impossible.

Walpole thought the time had fully come when it would be right for him to show that, while still striving for peace, he was not unprepared for war. He sent a squadron of line-of-battle ships to the Mediterranean and several cruisers to the West Indies, and he allowed letters of marque to be issued. These demonstrations had the effect of making the Spanish Government somewhat lower their tone—at least they had the effect of making that Government seem more willing to come to terms. Long negotiations as to the amount of claim on the one side and of set-off on the other were gone into both in London and Madrid. We need not study the figures, for nothing came of the proposed arrangement. It was impossible that anything could come of it. England and Spain were quarrelling over several great international questions. Even these questions were themselves only symbolical of a still greater one, of a paramount question which was never put into words: the question whether England or Spain was to have the ascendant

in the new world across the Atlantic. Walpole and the Spanish Government drew up an arrangement, or rather professed to find a basis of arrangement, for the paying off of certain money claims. A Convention was agreed upon, and was signed on January 14, 1739. The Convention arranged that a certain sum of money was to be paid by Spain to England within a given time, but that this discharge of claims should not extend to any dispute between the King of Spain and the South Sea Company as holders of the Asiento Contract; and that two plenipotentiaries from each side should meet at Madrid to settle the claims of England and Spain with regard to the rights of trade in the New World and the boundaries of Carolina and Florida. This Convention, it will be seen, left the really important subjects of dispute exactly where they were before.

Such as it was, however, it had hardly been signed before the diplomatists were already squabbling over the extent and interpretation of its terms, and mixing it up with the attempted arrangement of other and older disputes. Parliament opened on February 1, 1739, and the speech from the throne told of the Convention arranged with Spain. "It is now," said the royal speech, "a great satisfaction to me that I am able to acquaint you that the measures I have pursued have had so good an effect that a Convention is concluded and ratified between me and the King of Spain, whereby, upon consideration had of the demands on both sides, that prince hath obliged himself to make reparation to my subjects for their losses by a certain stipulated payment; and plenipotentiaries are therein named and appointed for redressing within a limited time all those grievances and abuses which have hitherto interrupted our commerce and navigation in the American seas, and for settling all matters in dispute in such a manner as may for the future prevent and remove all new causes and pretences of complaint by a strict observance of our mutual treaties and a just regard to the rights and privileges belonging to each other." The King promised that the Convention should be laid before the House at once.

Before the terms of the Convention were fully in the knowledge of Parliament, there was already a strong dis-



satisfaction felt among the leading men of the Opposition. We need not set this down to the mere determination of implacable partisans not to be content with anything proposed or executed by the Ministers of the Crown. Sir John Barnard was certainly no implacable partisan in that sense. He was really a true-hearted and patriotic Englishman. Yet Sir John Barnard was one of the very first to predict that the Convention would be found utterly unsatisfactory. There is nothing surprising in the prediction. The King's own speech, which naturally made the best of things, left it evident that no important and international question had been touched by the Convention. Every dispute over which war might have to be made remained in just the same state after the Convention as before. Lord Carteret in the House of Lords boldly assumed that the Convention must be unsatisfactory, and even degrading, to the English people, and he denounced it with all the eloquence and all the vigour of which he was capable. Lord Hervey vainly appealed to the House to bear in mind that the Convention was not yet before them. "Let us read it," he urged, "before we condemn it." Vain, indeed, was the appeal; the Convention was already condemned. The very description of it in the speech from the throne had condemned it in advance.

The Convention was submitted to Parliament and made known to the country. The reception it got was just what might have been expected. The one general cry was that the agreement gave up or put aside every serious claim made by England. Spain had not renounced her right of search; the boundaries of England's new colonies had not been defined; not a promise was made by Spain that the Spanish officials who had imprisoned and tortured unoffending British subjects should be punished or even brought to any manner of trial. In the heated temper of the public the whole Convention seemed an inappropriate and highly offensive farce. On February 23 the sheriffs of the City of London presented to the House of Commons a petition against the Convention. The petition expressed the great concern and surprise of the citizens of London "to find by the Convention lately concluded between his Majesty and

the King of Spain that the Spaniards are so far from giving up their (as we humbly apprehend) unjust pretension of a right to visit and search our ships on the seas of America that this pretension of theirs is, among others, referred to the future regulation and decision of plenipotentiaries appointed on each side, whereby we apprehend it is in some degree admitted." The petition referred to the "cruel treatment of the English sailors whose hard fate has thrown them into the hands of the Spaniards," and added, with a curious mixture of patriotic sentiment and practical, business-like selfishness, that if this cruel treatment of English seamen were to be put up with, and no reparation demanded, it might have the effect"—of what, does the reader think?—"of deterring the seamen from undertaking voyages to the seas of America without an advance of wages, which that trade or any other will not be able to support."

The same petition was presented to the House of Lords by the Duke of Bedford. Lord Carteret moved that the petitioners should be heard by themselves, and, if they should desire it, by counsel. It was agreed, after some debate, that the petitioners should be heard by themselves in the first instance, and that if afterwards they desired to be heard by counsel their request should be taken into consideration. Lord Chesterfield in the course of the debate contrived ingeniously to give a keen stroke to the Convention while declaring that he did not presume as yet to form any opinion on it, or to anticipate any discussion on its merits. "I cannot help," he said, "saying, however, that to me it is a most unfavourable symptom of its being for the good of the nation when I see so strong an opposition made to it out of doors by those who are the most immediately concerned in its effects."

A debate of great interest, animation, and importance took place in the House of Lords when the Convention was laid before that assembly. The Earl of Cholmondeley moved that an address be presented to the King to thank him for having concluded the Convention. The address was drawn up by a very dexterous hand, a master hand. Its terms were such as might have conciliated the leaders

of Opposition, if indeed these were to be conciliated by anything short of Walpole's resignation, for, while the address approved of all that had been done thus far, it cleverly assumed that all this was but the preliminary to a real settlement; and by ingenuously expressing the entire reliance of the House on the King's taking care that proper provision should be made for the redress of various specified grievances it succeeded in making it quite clear that in the opinion of the House such provision had not yet been made. The address concluded most significantly with an assurance to the King that "in case your Majesty's just expectations shall not be answered, this House will heartily and zealously concur in all such measures as shall be necessary to vindicate your Majesty's honour, and to preserve to your subjects the full enjoyment of all those rights to which they are entitled by treaty and the Law of Nations." An address of this kind would seem one that might well have been moved as an amendment to a ministerial address, and understood to be obliquely a vote of censure on the advisers of the Crown. It seems the sort of address that Carteret might have moved and Chesterfield seconded. Carteret and Chesterfield opposed it with spirit and eloquence. "Upon your Lordships' behaviour to-day," said Carteret at the close of a bitter and a passionate attack upon the Ministry and the Convention, "depends the fate of the British Empire. . . . This nation has hitherto maintained her independence by maintaining her commerce; but if either is weakened the other must fail. It is by her commerce that she has been hitherto enabled to stand her ground against all the open and secret attacks of the enemies to her religion, liberties, and constitution. It is from commerce, my Lords, that I behold your Lordships within these walls, a free, an independent assembly; but, should any considerations influence your Lordships to give so fatal a wound to the interest and honour of this kingdom as your agreeing to this address, it is the last time I shall have occasion to trouble this House. For, my Lords, if we are to meet only to give a sanction to measures that overthrow all our rights, I should look upon it as a misfortune for me to be either accessory or witness to such a compliance. I



will not only repeat what the merchants told your Lordships—that their trade is ruined; I will go farther; I will say the nobility is ruined, the whole nation is undone. For I can call this treaty nothing else but a mortgage of your honour, a surrender of your liberties.” Such language may now seem too overwrought and extravagant to have much effect upon an assembly of practical men. But it was not language likely to be considered overwrought and extravagant at that time and during that crisis. The Opposition had positively worked themselves into the belief that if the Convention were accepted the last day of England’s strength, prosperity, and glory had come. Carteret besides was talking to the English public as well as to the House of Lords. He knew what he meant when he denounced the enemies of England’s religion as well as the enemies of England’s trade. The imputation was that the Minister himself was a secret confederate of the enemies of the national religion as well as the enemies of the national trade. Men who but a few short years before were secretly engaged in efforts at a Stuart restoration, which certainly would not be an event much in harmony with the spread of the Protestant faith in England, were now denouncing Walpole every day on the ground that he was caballing with Catholic Spain, the Spain of Philip the Second, the Spain of the Armada and the Inquisition, the implacable enemy of England’s national religion.

The Duke of Argyll made a most vehement speech against the proposed address. He dealt a sharp blow against the Ministry when he declared that the whole Convention was a French and not a Spanish measure. He said he should never be persuaded that fear of aught that could be done by Spain could have induced Ministers to accept “this thing you call a Convention.” “It is the interest of France that our navigation and commerce should be ruined; we are the only people in the world whom France has reason to be apprehensive of in America, and every advantage that Spain gains in point of commerce is gained for her. . . . So far as I can judge from the tenor of our late behaviour, our dread of France has been the spring of all our weak and ruinous measures. To this

dread we have sacrificed the most distinguishing honours of this kingdom. This dread of France has changed every maxim of right government among us. There is no measure for the advantage of this kingdom that has been set on foot for these many years to which she has not given a negative. There is no measure so much to our detriment into which she has not led us." He scornfully declared that what the reasons of Ministers might be for this pusillanimity he could not tell, "for, my Lords, though I am a privy councillor I am as unacquainted with the secrets of the Government as any private gentleman that hears me." Then he told an anecdote of the late Lord Peterborough. "When Lord Peterborough was asked by a friend one day his opinion of a certain measure, says my Lord in some surprise: 'This is the first time I ever heard of it.' 'Impossible,' says the other; 'why, you are a privy councillor.' 'So I am,' replies his Lordship, 'and there is a Cabinet councillor coming up to us just now; if you ask the same question of him he will perhaps hold his peace, and then you will think he is in the secret; but if he opens once his mouth about it you will find he knows as little of it as I do.' No, my Lords," exclaimed the Duke of Argyll, "it is not being in Privy Council or in Cabinet Council; one must be in the Minister's counsel to know the true motives of our late proceedings." The Duke concluded his oration, characteristically, with a glorification of his own honest and impartial heart.

The address was sure to be carried; Walpole's influence was still strong enough to accomplish that much. But everybody must already have seen that the Convention was not an instrument capable of satisfying, or, indeed, framed with any notion of satisfying, the popular demands of England. It was an odd sort of arrangement, partly international and partly personal; an adjustment, or attempted adjustment, here of a dispute between States and there of a dispute between rival trading companies. The reconstituted South Sea Company—which had now become one of the three great trading companies of England, the East India Company and the Bank being the other two—had all manner of negotiations, arrangements,

and transactions with the King of Spain. All these affairs now became mixed up with the national claims, and were dealt with alike in the Convention. The British plenipotentiary at the Spanish Court was—still further to complicate matters—the agent for the South Sea Company. The Convention provided that certain set-off claims of Spain should be taken into consideration as well as the claims of England. Spain had some demands against England for the value of certain vessels of the Spanish navy attacked and captured during the reign of George the First without a declaration of war. The claim had been admitted in principle by England, and it became what would be called in the law courts only a question of damages. Then the Convention contained some stipulations concerning certain claims of Spain upon the South Sea Company, that is, on what was, after all, only a private trading company. When the anomaly was pointed out by Lord Carteret and others in the House of Lords, and it was asked how came it that the English plenipotentiary at the Court of Spain was also the agent of the South Sea Company, it was ingeniously answered on the part of the Government that nothing could be more fitting and proper, seeing that, as English plenipotentiary, he had to act for England with the King of Spain, and as agent for the South Sea Company to deal with the same Sovereign in that Sovereign's capacity as a great private merchant. Therefore the national claims were made to a certain extent subservient to, or dependent on, the claims of the South Sea Company. Whether we may think the claims of the English merchants and seamen were exaggerated or not, one thing is obvious: they could not possibly be satisfied under such a Convention.

The debate in the House of Lords was carried on by the Opposition with great spirit and brilliancy. Lord Hervey defended the policy of the Government with dexterity. Possibly he made as much of the case as could be made of it. The motion for the address was carried by 71 votes against 58—a marked increase of strength on the part of the Opposition. It is to be recorded that the Prince of Wales gave his first vote in Parliament to support the Opposition. The name of "His Royal Highness the



Prince of Wales" is the first in the division list of peers who voted against the address and in favour of the policy of war. There was nothing very mutinous in Frederick's action so far as the King was concerned. Very likely Frederick would have given the same vote, no matter what the King's views on the subject. But every one knew that George was eager for war, that he was fully convinced of his capacity to win laurels on the battle-field, and that he was longing to wear them. A Bonaparte prince of our own day was described by a French literary man as an unemployed Cæsar. King George believed himself an unemployed Cæsar, and was clamorous for early employment.

## CHAPTER XXXII

### WALPOLE YIELDS TO WAR

THE nation was plunging, not drifting, into war. Walpole himself, while still striving hard to put off any decisive step, and even yet perhaps hoping against hope that the people would return to their senses and leave the Patriots to themselves, did not venture any longer to meet the demands of the Opposition by bold argument founded on the principles of justice and wisdom. He had sometimes to talk the same "tall talk" as that in which the Patriots delighted, and to rave a little about the great deeds that would have to be done if Spain did not listen to reason very soon. But he still pleaded that Spain would listen to reason soon, very soon, and that if war must come sooner or later he preferred to take it later. That, it need hardly be said, was not Walpole's expression—it belongs to a later day—but it represents his mode of argument.

On March 6 the House of Commons met for the purpose of taking the foredoomed Convention into consideration. So intense was the interest taken in the subject, so highly strung was political feeling, that more than four hundred members were in their places at eight

o'clock in the morning. Seldom indeed is anxiety expressed in so emphatic and conclusive a form among members of the House of Commons. Readers may remember one day within recent years when a measure of momentous importance was to be introduced into the House of Commons, and when long before eight in the morning every seat in the House was occupied. On this March 6, 1739, the House resolved itself into Committee, and spent the whole day in hearing some of the merchants and other witnesses against the Convention. The whole of the next day (Wednesday) was occupied in the reading of documents bearing on the subject, and it was not until Thursday that the debate began. The debate was more memorable for what followed it than for itself. In itself it was the familiar succession of fierce and unscrupulous attacks on the policy of peace, mixed up with equally fierce but certainly very well-deserved attacks on the character of the Convention. William Pitt wound up his speech by declaring that "this Convention, I think from my soul, is nothing but a stipulation for national ignominy; an illusory expedient to baffle the resentment of the nation; a truce without a suspension of hostilities on the part of Spain; on the part of England a suspension, as to Georgia, of the first law of nature, self-preservation and self-defence; a surrender of the rights and the trade of England to the mercy of plenipotentiaries, and in this infinitely highest and sacred point, future security, not only inadequate, but directly repugnant to the resolutions of Parliament and the gracious promise from the throne. The complaints of your despairing merchants, the voice of England, have condemned it; be the guilt of it upon the head of its adviser. God forbid that this Committee should share the guilt by approving it!"

One point in the debate is worthy of notice. The address to the King approving of the Convention was moved by Horatio Walpole, the diplomatist, brother of Sir Robert. In the course of his speech Horatio Walpole declared that the outbreak of war between England and any great continental State would be certain to be followed by a new blow struck by the Pretender and his followers.

Some of the orators of Opposition spoke with immense scorn of the possibility of a Jacobite movement ever again being heard of in England. The Walpoles both generally understood pretty well what they were talking about. The prediction of Horatio Walpole came true.

The address was carried by 260 against 232. The ministerial majority had run down to 28. Next day the battle was renewed. According to parliamentary usage the report of the address was brought up, and Pulteney seized the opportunity to make another vehement attack on the Convention and the Ministers. He accused the Prime Minister of meanly stooping to the dictates of a haughty, insolent court, and of bartering away the lives and liberties of Englishmen for "a sneaking, temporary, disgraceful expedient." But the interest of the day was to come. The address was agreed to by a majority of 262 against 234. This was exactly the same majority as before, only with both sides slightly strengthened. Then the principal leaders of Opposition thought the time had come for them to intervene with a deliberately planned *coup de théâtre*. Acting, it is understood, under the advice of Bolingbroke, they had been looking out for an opportunity to secede from the House of Commons on the ground that it was vain for patriotic men to try to do their duty to their country in a House of which the majority, narrow though it was, was yet the absolute slave of such a Minister as Walpole. They hoped that such a step would have two effects. It would, they believed, create an immense sensation all over England and make them the heroes of the hour; and they fondly hoped that it would scare Walpole and prevent him from passing in their absence the measures which their presence was unable to prevent. Such, we have no doubt, were the ideas of Bolingbroke and of Pulteney, and of others; but we do not say that they were the ideas of the man who was entrusted with the duty of announcing the intentions of his party. This was Sir William Wyndham; and we do not believe that any hope of being one of the heroes of the hour entered for a moment into his mind. He only in a general honest thought, and common good to all, made one of them.



Wyndham rose, and in a speech of great solemnity announced that he was about to pay his last duty to his country as a member of that House. What hope, he asked, was there when the eloquence of one man had so great an effect within the walls of the House of Commons, and the unanimous voice of a brave, suffering people without had so little? He implied that the majority of the House must have been determined "by arguments that we have not heard." He bade an adieu to Parliament. "Perhaps," he said, "when another Parliament shall succeed, I may again be at liberty to serve my country in the same capacity." In other words, if the next Parliament should declare war on Spain after having got rid of Walpole, then Wyndham and his friends might be prevailed on to return. "I therefore appeal to a future, free, uninfluenced Parliament. Let it be the judge of my conduct and that of my friends on this occasion. Meantime, I shall conclude with doing that duty to my country which I am still at liberty to perform: which is to pray for its preservation. May, therefore, that Power which has so often and so visibly before interposed on behalf of the rights and liberties of this nation continue its care over us at this worst and most dangerous juncture; while the insolence of enemies without and the influence of corruption within threaten the ruin of her Constitution."

This speech created, as will readily be imagined, an immense sensation in the House. A member of the Administration, one of the Pelhams, lost his head so completely that he sprang up with the intention of moving that Wyndham be committed to the Tower. Walpole, who was not in the habit of losing his head, prevented the ardent Pelham from carrying out his purpose. Walpole knew quite well that something better could be done than to evoke for any of the Patriots the antiquated terrors of the Tower. Walpole delivered a speech which, for its suppressed passion and its stern severity, was well equal to the occasion. The threat of Wyndham and his friends gave him, he said, no uneasiness. The friends of the Parliament and the nation were obliged to them for pulling off the mask—"We can be upon our guard against open rebellion;

it is hard to guard against secret treason." "The faction I speak of never sat in this House, they never joined in any public measure of the Government, but with a view to distress it and to serve a Popish interest." Walpole was delighted to have an opportunity of paying off the Opposition for their constant denunciations of his alleged subservience to the throne of France, by flinging in Wyndham's teeth his old devotion to the cause of the Stuarts. "The gentleman," he said, "who is now the mouth of this faction was looked upon as the head of those traitors who twenty-five years ago conspired the destruction of their country and of the royal family to set a Popish Pretender on the throne. He was seized by the vigilance of the then Government and pardoned by its clemency, but all the use he has ungratefully made of that clemency has been to qualify himself according to law, that he and his party may some time or other have an opportunity to overthrow all law." For himself, Walpole declared he was only afraid that the gentlemen would not be as good as their word, and that they would return to Parliament. "For I remember," he said, "that in the case of their favourite prelate who was impeached of treason"—Atterbury—"the same gentleman and his faction made the same resolution. They then went off like traitors as they were; but their retreat had not the detestable effect they expected and wished, and therefore they returned. Ever since they have persevered in the same treasonable intention of serving that interest by distressing the Government."

The House broke up in wild excitement; such excitement as had not been known there since the Excise Bill or the South Sea Bubble. About sixty of the Opposition kept for the time their promise of secession. Sir John Barnard and two or three other men of mark in the party had the good sense to see that they could serve their cause, whatever it might be, better by remaining at their posts than by withdrawing from public life. The secession of a party from the House of Commons can hardly ever be anything but a mistake. We are speaking now, of course, of a secession more serious and prolonged than that which concerns a particular stage of some measure. There have

been occasions when the party in Opposition, after having fought their best against some obnoxious measure in all its former stages, and finding that further struggle would be unavailing, consider that they can make their protest more effectively, and draw public attention more directly to the nature of the controversy, by withdrawing in a body from the House of Commons and leaving the Government alone with their responsibility. Such a course as this has been taken more than once in our own days. It can do no practical harm to the public interest, and it may do some service as a political demonstration. But a genuine secession, a prolonged secession, must, in the nature of things, do harm. It is wrong in principle; for a man is elected to the House of Commons in order that he may represent his constituents and maintain their interests there. To do that is his plain duty and business, which is not to be put away for the sake of indulging in any petulant or romantic impulse to withdraw from an assembly because one cannot have one's way there. No matter how small the minority on one side of the question, we have seen over and over again what work of political education may be done by a resolute few who will not cease to put forward their arguments and to fight for their cause.

In the case with which we are now dealing Wyndham and his friends only gratified Walpole by their unwise course of action. They enabled him to get through some of the work of the session smoothly and easily. A division hardly ever was known; and of some debates on really important questions there is positively no record. There was, for instance, a motion made in the House of Commons on March 30 for leave to bring in a Bill "to repeal so much of an Act passed in the 25th of King Charles the Second, entitled An Act for preventing Dangers which may happen from Popish Recusants, as obligeth all persons who are admitted to any office, civil or military, to receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper within a time limited by the said Act; and for explaining and amending so much of the said Act as relates to the declaration against transubstantiation." This proposal was supported by some of Walpole's friends; and, of course, Walpole himself was in



favour of its principle. But he was not disposed in the least to trouble his master or himself about the repeal of Test Acts, either in the interest of the Roman Catholics or the Nonconformists, and he opposed the motion. There was a long debate, but the record says that "the particulars of it not having been made public, we can give no further account of it, but that, many of the members being retired from Parliament, as before mentioned, and most of those concerned in the Administration being against it, the question passed in the negative, 188 noes to 89 yeas."

The Government were also enabled to pass without any resistance in the House of Commons a very ignoble and shabby little treaty with the King of Denmark, by which England undertook to pay to Denmark seventy thousand pounds a year for three years on condition that Denmark should furnish to King George a body of troops, six thousand men in all, these troops to be ready at any time when the King of England should call for them, and he being bound to pay a certain sum "by way of levy-money" for each soldier. This was not really an English measure at all. It had nothing to do with the interests of England, or of George as Sovereign of England. It was merely an arrangement between the King of Denmark and the Elector of Hanover, -and was the settlement or composition of a miserable quarrel about a castle and a scrap of ground which George had bought from the Duchy of Holstein, and which Denmark claimed as her own. The dispute led to a military scuffle in which the Danes got the worst of it, and it might have led to a war but that the timely treaty and the promised annual payment brought the King of Denmark round to George's views. The treaty met with some opposition, or at all events some remonstrance, in the House of Lords. Carteret, however, gave it his support, and declared that he thought the treaty a wise and a just measure. Carteret was always in favour of the Hanoverian policy of King George.

So far, therefore, Walpole had things his own way. He was very glad to be rid of the Opposition for the time. But war was to come all the same. Walpole was not strong enough to prevent that. The incessant attacks made

in both Houses of Parliament had inflamed the people of Spain into a passion as great as that which in England was driving Walpole before it. The Spanish Government would not pay the amount arranged for in the Convention. They put forward as their justification the fact, or alleged fact, that the South Sea Company had failed to discharge its obligations to Spain. The British squadron had been sent to the Mediterranean, and the Spaniards declared that this was a threat and an insult to the King of Spain. The claim to the right of search was asserted more loudly and vehemently than ever. Near to the close of the session there was a passionate debate in the House of Lords on the whole subject. The Opposition insisted that the honour of England would not admit of further delay, and that the sword must be unsheathed at once. The Duke of Newcastle could only appeal to the House on the part of the Government not to pass a resolution calling upon the King to declare war, but to leave it to the King to choose his own opportunity. Newcastle feebly pleaded that to pass a resolution would be to give untimely warning to England's enemies, and reminded the House that England was likely to have to encounter an enemy stronger and more formidable than Spain. Lord Hardwicke and Lord Scarborough could only urge on the House the prudence and propriety of leaving the time and manner of action in the hands of the Ministry, in the full assurance that the Ministers would do all that the nation desired. In other words, the Ministers were already pledged to war. The session was brought to an end on June 14, and on October 19 England declared war against Spain. The proclamation was greeted with the wildest outburst of popular enthusiasm; an enthusiasm which at the time seemed to run through all orders and classes. Joy-bells rang out their inspiring chimes from every church. Exulting crowds shouted in a stentorian chorus of delight. Cities flamed with illuminations at night. The Prince of Wales and some of the leaders of the Opposition took part in the public demonstration. The Prince stopped at the door of a tavern in Fleet Street, as if he were another Prince Hal carousing with his mates, and called for a goblet of wine, which he drank to the

toast of coming victory. The bitter words of Walpole have indeed been often quoted; but they cannot be omitted here: "They may ring their bells now; before long they will be wringing their hands." Walpole was thinking, no doubt, of the Family Compact, and of "the King over the water."

Parliament met in November 1739, and the Seceders were all in their places again. They had been growing heartily sick of secession and inactivity, and they insisted on regarding the declaration of war against Spain as a justification of their return to parliamentary life. Pulteney made himself their spokesman in the debate on the Address. "Our step," he said, meaning their secession, "is so fully justified by the declaration of war, so universally approved, that any further vindication of it would be superfluous." They seceded when they felt that their opposition was ineffectual, and that their presence was only made use of to give the appearance of a fair debate to that which had already been ratified. "The state of affairs is now changed; the measures of the Ministers are altered; and the same regard for the honour and welfare of their country that determined these gentlemen to withdraw has now brought them hither once more, to give their advice and assistance in those measures which they then pointed out as the only means of asserting and retrieving them." Walpole's reply was a little ungracious. It was, in effect, that he thought the country could have done very well without the services of the honourable members; that they never would have been missed; and that the nation was generally wide awake to the fact that the many useful and popular measures passed towards the close of the last session owed their passing to the happy absence from Parliament of Pulteney and his friends. One might well excuse Walpole if he became sometimes a little impatient of the attitudinising and the vapouring of the Patriots.

One of the Patriots was not long to trouble Walpole. On July 17, 1740, Sir William Wyndham died. Wyndham was a man of honour and a man of intellect. We have already in this history described his abilities and his character: his political purity; his personal consistency. He had always



been in poor health; his incessant parliamentary work certainly could not have tended to improve his physical condition; and he was but fifty-three years old when he died. Had he lived yet a little longer, he must have taken high office in a new Administration, and he might have proved himself a statesman as well as a party leader and a parliamentary orator. Perhaps, on the whole, it is better for his fame that he should have been spared the test. It proved too much for Carteret. We may give Bolingbroke credit for sincerity when he poured out in letter after letter his lament for Wyndham's death. There is something, however, characteristic of the age and the man in Bolingbroke's instant assumption that Walpole must regard the death as a fine stroke of good luck for himself. "What a star has our Minister," Bolingbroke wrote to a friend—"Wyndham dead!" It seems strange that Bolingbroke should not even then have been able to see that the star of the great Minister was about to set. The death of Wyndham brought Walpole no profit; gave him no security. But Wyndham's premature end withdrew a picturesque and a chivalric figure from the life of the House of Commons. He was one of the few, the very few, really unselfish and high-minded men who then occupied a prominent position in Parliament. He was not fighting for his own hand. He was not a mere partisan. He had enough of the statesman in him to be able to accept established facts and not to argue with the inexorable. He was not a scholar like Carteret, or an orator like Bolingbroke; he was not an ascetic; but he had stainless political integrity, and was a true friend to his friends.

Walpole committed the great error of his life when he consented to accept the war policy which his enemies had proclaimed, and which he had so long resisted. Even if we consider his conduct not as a question of principle, but only as one of mere expediency, it must still be condemned. No statesman is likely to be able to conduct a great war whose heart is all the time filled only with a longing for peace. Walpole was perhaps less likely than any other statesman to make a War Minister. He could not throw his heart into the work. He went to it because he was driven

to it. It was simply a choice between declaring war and resigning office, and he merely preferred to declare war. This is not the temper, these are not the conditions, for carrying out a policy of war. But, as a question of principle, Walpole's conduct admits of no defence. His plain duty was to refuse to administer a policy of which he did not approve, and to leave the responsibility of the war to those who did approve of it. It is said that he tendered his resignation to the King; that the King implored Walpole to stand by him—not to desert him in that hour of need; and that Walpole at last consented to remain in office. This may possibly be true; some such form may have been gone through. But it does not alter the historical judgment about Walpole's action. Walpole ought not to have gone through any forms at such a time. He hated the war policy; he knew that he was not a War Minister; he ought to have refused to administer such a policy, and have stood by his refusal. It is said that, in his conversation with the King, Walpole pointed out that to the Minister would be attributed every disaster that might occur during a war, his opposition to which would always be considered a crime. But would there be anything very unfair or unreasonable in that? When a statesman who has fought hard against a war policy suddenly yields to it, and consents to put it into action, would it be unreasonable, if disaster should occur, that his enemies should say, "This comes of trying to conduct a war in which you have no heart or spirit"? Burke passes severe censure even on Walpole's manner of carrying on his opposition to the war party. "Walpole," says Burke, "never manfully put forward the strength of his cause; he temporised; he managed; and, adopting very nearly the sentiments of his adversaries, he opposed their inferences. This, for a political commander, is the choice of a weak post. His adversaries had the best of the argument as he handled it; not as the reason and justice of his cause enabled him to manage it." Then Burke adds this emphatic sentence: "I say this after having seen, and with some care examined, the original documents concerning certain important transactions of those times; they perfectly satisfied me of the extreme injustice of that war, and of the

falsehood of the colours which, to his own ruin, and guided by a mistaken policy, he suffered to be daubed over that measure." To his own ruin? Yes, truly. The consequence of Walpole's surrender was to himself and his political career fatal—irretrievable. His wrong-doing brought its heavy punishment along with it. He has yet to struggle for a short while against fate and his own fault; he has still to receive a few successive humiliations before the great and final fall. But the day of his destiny is over. For all real work his career may be said to have closed on the day when he consented to remain in office and become the instrument of his enemies. With that day he passed out of the real world and life of politics, and became as a shadow among shadows.

We need not trouble ourselves much about the war with Spain. On neither side of the struggle was anything done which calls for grave historical notice. Every little naval success one of our admirals accomplished in the American seas, as they were then called, was glorified as if it had been an anticipated Trafalgar; and our admirals accomplished blunders and failures as well as petty victories. The quarrel very soon became swallowed up in the great war which broke out on the death of Charles the Sixth of Spain, and the occupation of Silesia by Frederick of Prussia. England lent a helping hand in the great war, but its tale does not belong to English history. Two predictions of Walpole's were very quickly realised. France almost immediately took part with Spain, in accordance with the terms of the Family Compact. In 1740 an organisation was got up in Scotland by a number of Jacobite noblemen and other gentlemen pledging themselves to stake fortune and life on the Stuart cause whenever its standard, supported by foreign auxiliaries, should be raised in Great Britain. This was the shadow cast before by the coming events of "Forty-five"—events which Walpole was not destined to see.

One link of personal interest connects England with the war. George sent a body of British and Hanoverian troops into the field to support Maria Theresa of Hungary. The troops were under the command of Lord



Stair, the veteran soldier and diplomatist, whose brilliant career has been already described in this history. George himself joined Lord Stair and fought at the battle of Dettingen, where the French were completely defeated; one of the few creditable events of the war, so far as English arms were concerned. George behaved with great courage and spirit. If the poor, stupid, puffy, plucky little man did but know what a strange, picturesque, memorable figure he was as he stood up against the enemy at that battle of Dettingen! The last King of England who ever appeared with his army in the battle-field! There, as he gets down off his unruly horse, determined to trust to his own stout legs—because, as he says, they will not run away—there is the last successor of the Williams, and the Edwards, and the Henrys; the last successor of the Conqueror, and Edward the First, and the Black Prince, and Henry the Fourth, and Henry of Agincourt, and William of Nassau; the last English King who faces a foe in battle. With him went out, in this country, the last tradition of the old and original duty and right of royalty—the duty and the right to march with the national army in war. A king in older days owed his kingship to his capacity for the brave squares of war. In other countries the tradition lingers still. A Continental Sovereign, even if he have not really the generalship to lead an army, must appear on the field of battle, and at least seem to lead it, and he must take his share of danger with the rest. But in England the very idea has died out, never in all probability to come back to life again. If one were to follow some of the examples set us in classical imaginings, we might fancy the darkening clouds on the west, where the sun has sunk over the battle-field, to be the phantom-shapes of the great English kings who led their people and their armies in the wars. Unkingly, indeed unheroic, little of kin with them, they might well have thought that panting George; and yet they might have looked on him with interest as the last of their proud race.

We have been anticipating a little; let us anticipate a little more and say what came of the war, so far as the claims originally made by England, or rather by the Patriots,

were concerned. When peace was arranged nearly ten years after, the *Asiento* was renewed for four years, and not one word was said in the treaty about Spain renouncing the right of search. The great clamour of the Patriots had been that Spain must be made to proclaim publicly her renunciation of the right of search; and when a treaty of settlement came to be drawn up not a sentence was inserted about the right of search, and no English statesman troubled his head about the matter. The words of Burke, taken out of one of his writings from which a quotation has already been made, form the most fitting epitaph on the war as it first broke out—the war of Jenkins’s Ear. “Some years after, it was my fortune,” says Burke, “to converse with many of the principal actors against that Minister (Walpole), and with those who principally excited that clamour. None of them—no, not one—did in the least defend the measure or attempt to justify their conduct. They condemned it as freely as they would have done in commenting upon any proceeding in history in which they were totally unconcerned.” Let it not be forgotten, however, that, while this is a condemnation of the Patriots, it is no less a condemnation of Walpole. The policy which none of them could afterwards defend, which he himself had always condemned and reprobated, he nevertheless undertook to carry out rather than submit to be driven from office. Schiller in one of his dramas mourns over the man who stakes reputation, health, and all upon success—and no success in the end. It was to be thus with Walpole.

## CHAPTER XXXIII

“AND WHEN HE FALLS——”

WALPOLE soon found that his enemies were no less bitter against him, no less resolute to harass and worry him, now that he had stooped to be their instrument and to do their work. Every unsuccessful movement in the war

was made the occasion of a motion for papers, a motion for an enquiry, a vote of want of confidence, or some other direct or indirect attack upon the Prime Minister. In the House of Lords, Lord Carteret was especially unsparing, and was brilliantly supported by Lord Chesterfield. In the House of Commons Samuel Sandys, a clever and respectable country gentleman from Worcestershire, made himself quite a sort of renown by his motions against Walpole. On Friday, February 13, 1741, a motion was made in each of the Houses of Parliament calling on the King "to remove the Right Honourable Sir Robert Walpole, Knight of the most noble Order of the Garter, First Commissioner for executing the office of Treasurer of the Exchequer, Chancellor and under-Treasurer of the Exchequer, and one of his Majesty's most honourable Privy Council, from his Majesty's presence and councils for ever." In the House of Lords the motion was made by Lord Carteret; in the House of Commons by Mr. Sandys, who was nicknamed "the motion-maker." The motion was lost by a large majority in the House of Lords; and in the House of Commons there were only 106 for it, while there were 290 against it. This was a victory; but it did not deceive Walpole. There would soon be a new Parliament, and Walpole knew very well that the country was already growing sick of the unmeaning war, and that he was held responsible alike for the war policy which he had so long opposed and the many little disasters of the war with which he had nothing to do. In Walpole's utter emergency he actually authorised a friend to apply for him to James Stuart at Rome in the hope of inducing James to obtain for him the support of some of the Jacobites at the coming elections. What he could possibly have thought he could promise James in return for the solicited support it is hard, indeed, to imagine; for no one can question the sincerity of Walpole's attachment to the reigning House. Perhaps if James had consented to go into the negotiations Walpole might have made some pledges about the English Catholics. Nothing came of it, however. James did not seem to take to the suggestion, and Walpole was left to do the best he could without any helping hand from Rome.



Lord Stanhope thinks it not unlikely that King George was fully aware of this curious attempt to get James Stuart to bring his influence to bear on the side of Walpole. The elections were fought out with unusual vehemence of partisanship, even for those days, and the air was thick with caricatures of Walpole and lampoons on his policy and his personal character. When the election storm was over, it was found that the Ministry had distinctly lost ground. In Scotland and in parts of the West of England the loss was most manifest. Walpole now was as well convinced as any of his enemies could be that the fall was near. He must have felt like some desperate duellist, who, having fought his fiercest and his best, is conscious at last that his strength is gone ; that he is growing fainter and fainter from loss of blood ; and conscious, too, that his antagonist already perceives this and exults in the knowledge, and is already seeking out with greedy eye for the best place in which to give the final touch of the rapier's point.

The new Parliament met on December 1, 1741, and re-elected Mr. Onslow as Speaker. The Speech from the throne was almost entirely taken up with somewhat cheerless references to the war with Spain, and the debate on the Address was naturally made the occasion for new attacks on the policy of the Government. "Certainly, my Lords," said Chesterfield, "it is not to be hoped that we should regain what we have lost but by measures different from those which have reduced us to our present state, and by the assistance of other counsellors than those who have sunk us into the contempt and exposed us to the ravages of every nation throughout the world." This was the string that had been harped upon in all the pamphlets and letters of the Patriots during the progress of the war. Walpole had done it all ; Walpole had delayed the war to gratify France ; he had prevented the war from being carried on vigorously in order to assist France ; he had obtained a majority in Parliament by the most outrageous and systematic corruption : he was an enemy of his country, and so forth. All these charges and allegations were merely founded on Walpole's public policy. They simply came to this, that a certain course of action taken by Walpole with

the approval of Parliament was declared by Walpole to have been taken from patriotic motives and for the good of England, and was declared by his enemies to have been taken from unpatriotic motives and in the interest of France. It was of no avail for Walpole to point out that everything he had done thus far had been done with the approval of the House of Commons. The answer was ready: "Exactly; and there is another of your crimes: you bribed and corrupted every former House of Commons."

On January 21, 1742, Pulteney brought forward a motion to refer all the papers concerning the war which had just been laid on the table to a Select Committee of the House, in order that the Committee should examine the papers and report to the House concerning them. This was simply a motion for a committee of enquiry into the manner in which Ministers were carrying on the war. The House was the fullest that had been known for many years. Pulteney had 250 votes with him; Walpole had only 253—a majority of three. Some of the efforts made on both sides to bring up the numbers on this occasion remind one of Hogarth's picture of the "Polling Day," where the paralytic, the maimed, the deaf, and the dying are carried up to record their vote. Men so feeble from sickness that they could not stand were brought down to the House wrapped up like mummies, and lifted through the division. Walpole seems to have surpassed himself in the speech which he made in his own defence. At least, such is the impression we get from the declaration of some of those who heard it; Pulteney himself among the rest. Pulteney always sat near to Walpole on the Treasury bench; Pulteney, of course, not admitting that he had in any way changed his political principles since Walpole and he were friends and colleagues. Pulteney offered to Walpole his warm congratulations on his speech, and added, "Well, nobody can do what you can." Pulteney might afford to be gracious. The victory of three was a substantial defeat. It was the prologue to a defeat which was to be formal as well as substantial. The Patriots were elated. The fruit of their long labours was about to come at last.

All this was telling hard upon Walpole's health. We get

melancholy accounts of the cruel work which his troubles were making with that frame which once might have seemed to be of iron. The robust animal spirits which could hardly be kept down in former days had now changed into a mournful and even a moping temperament. His son, Horace Walpole, gives a very touching picture of him in these decaying years. "He who was asleep as soon as his head touched the pillow—for I have frequently known him snore ere they had drawn his curtains—now never sleeps above an hour without waking; and he who at dinner always forgot he was Minister, and was more gay and thoughtless than all the company, now sits without speaking and with his eyes fixed for an hour together." Many of his friends implored him to give up the hopeless and thankless task. Walpole still clung to office; still tried new stratagems; planned new combinations; racked his brain for new devices. He actually succeeded in inducing the King to have an offer made to the Prince of Wales of an addition of fifty thousand pounds a year to his income, provided that Frederick would desist from opposition to the measures of the Government. The answer was what every one must have expected: every one, surely, but Walpole. The Prince professed any amount of duty to his father, but as regards Walpole he was implacable. He would listen to no terms of compromise while the great enemy of himself and of his party remained in office.

The Duke of Newcastle had notoriously turned traitor to Walpole. Lord Wilmington, whose "evaporation" as Sir Spencer Compton marked Walpole's first great success under George the Second, was approached by some of Walpole's enemies and besought to employ his influence with the King to get Walpole dismissed. It is said that even Lord Hervey now began to hold aloof from him. It was only a question of time and the hour. Walpole's enemies were already going about proclaiming their determination not to be satisfied with merely turning him out of office; he must be impeached and brought to condign punishment. Walpole's friends—those of them who were left—made this another reason for imploring him to resign. They pleaded that by a timely resignation he might at least



save himself from the peril of an impeachment. Walpole showed a determination which had much that was pitiable and something that was heroic about it. He would not fly—bear-like he would fight the course.

The final course soon came. The battle was on a petition from the defeated candidates for Chippenham, who claimed the seats on the ground of an undue election and return. Election petitions were then heard and decided by the House of Commons itself, and not by a committee of the House as in more recent days. The decision of the House was always simply a question of party; and no one had ever insisted more strongly than Walpole himself that it must be a question of party. The Government desired the Chippenham petition to succeed. On some disputed point the Opposition prevailed over the Government by a majority of one. It is always said that Walpole then at once made up his mind to resign; and that the knowledge of his intention put such heart into those who were falling away from him as to bring about the marked increase which was presently to take place in the majority against him. We are inclined to think that he even still hesitated, and that his hesitation caused the increase in the hostile majority. He must go—he has to go—people said; and the sooner we make this clear to him the better. Anyhow the end was near. The Chippenham election was carried against him by a majority of sixteen—241 votes against 225. A note at the bottom of the page of the Parliamentary Debates for that day says: "The Chippenham election being thus carried in favour of the sitting members, it was reported that Sir Robert Walpole publicly declared he would never enter the House of Commons more." This was on February 2, 1742. Next day the Lord Chancellor signified the pleasure of the King that both Houses of Parliament should adjourn until the eighteenth of the month. Everybody knew what had happened. The long Administration of twenty years was over; the great Minister had fallen, never to lift his head again. The Parliamentary record thus tells us what had happened: "The same evening the Right Honourable Sir Robert Walpole resigned his place of First Commissioner

of the Treasury and Chancellor and Under-Treasurer of the Exchequer, which he had held ever since April 4, 1721, in the former of which he succeeded the Earl of Sunderland, and in the latter Mr. Aislalie."

That, however, was not the deepest depth of the fall. The same record announces that "three days afterwards his Majesty was pleased to create him Earl of Orford, Viscount Walpole, and Baron of Houghton." "Posterity," says Macaulay, "has obstinately refused to degrade Francis Bacon into Viscount St. Albans." Posterity has in like manner obstinately refused to degrade Robert Walpole into the Earl of Orford. He will be known as Robert Walpole so long as English history itself is known.

Walpole, then, was on the ground—down in the dust—never to rise again. Surely, it would seem, the close of his career as a Prime Minister must be the opening of that of his rival and conqueror. Any one now—supposing there could be some one entirely ignorant of what did really happen—would assume as a matter of course that Pulteney would at once become Prime Minister and proceed to form an Administration. This was naturally in Pulteney's power. But Pulteney suddenly remembered having said long ago that he would accept no office, and he declared that he would positively hold to his word. At a moment of excitement, it would seem, and stung by some imputation of self-seeking, Pulteney had adopted the high Roman fashion and announced that he would prove his political disinterestedness by refusing to accept any office in any Administration. The King consulted Walpole during all these arrangements, and Walpole strongly recommended him to offer the position of Prime Minister to Lord Wilmington. Time had come round indeed—this was the Sir Spencer Compton for whom King George at his accession had endeavoured to thrust away Walpole, but whom Walpole had quietly thrust away. He was an utterly incapable man. Walpole probably thought that it would ruin the new Administration in the end if it were to have such a man as Compton, now Lord Wilmington, at its head. Lord Wilmington accepted the position. Lord Carteret had desired the post for himself, but Pulteney

would not hear of it. The Office of Secretary of State, of the Secretary of State who had to do with foreign affairs, was the proper place, he insisted, for a man like Carteret. The Secretaries then divided their functions into a Northern department and a Southern department. The Northern department was concerned with the charge of Russia, Prussia, Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, Poland, and Saxony; the Southern department looked after France, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Switzerland, Turkey, and the States along the southern shores of the Mediterranean. So Carteret became one Secretary, and the grotesque Duke of Newcastle remained the other. The Duke's brother, Henry Pelham, remained in his place as Paymaster, Lord Hardwicke retained his office as Lord Chancellor, and Mr. Samuel Sandys, who had moved the resolution calling for Walpole's dismissal, took Walpole's place as Chancellor of the Exchequer. There seems some humour in the appointment of such a man as successor to Robert Walpole.

Then Pulteney's career as a great Prime Minister is not beginning? No—not beginning—never to begin. By one of the strangest strokes of fate the events which closed the career of Walpole closed the career of Pulteney too. Yet but a few months, and Pulteney ceases as completely as Walpole has done to move the world of politics. The battle is over and the rival leaders have both fallen. One monument might suffice for both: like that for Wolfe and Montcalm at Quebec. Pulteney was offered a peerage, an offer which he had contemptuously rejected twice before. He accepted it now. It will probably never be fully and certainly known why he committed this act of political suicide. Walpole appears to have been under the impression that it was by his cleverness the King had been prevailed upon to drive Pulteney into the House of Lords. Walpole, indeed, very probably made the suggestion to the King, and no doubt had as his sole motive in making it the desire to consign Pulteney to obscurity; but it does not seem as if his was the influence which accomplished the object. Lord Carteret and the Duke of Newcastle both hated Pulteney, who as cordially hated them. Newcastle



was jealous of Pulteney because of his immense influence in the House of Commons, which he fancied must be in some sort of way an injury to himself and his brother; and, stupid as he was, he felt certain that if Pulteney consented to enter the House of Lords the popularity and the influence would vanish. Carteret's was a more reasonable if not a more noble jealousy. He was determined to come to the head of affairs himself—to be Prime Minister in fact if not in name; and he feared that he never could be this so long as Pulteney remained, what some one had called him, the Tribune of the Commons. Once get him into the House of Lords, and there was an end to the tribune and the tribune's career. As for himself, Carteret, he would then be able to domineer over both Houses by his commanding knowledge of foreign affairs, now of such paramount importance to the State, and by his entire sympathy with the views of the King. The King hated Pulteney; had never forgiven him his championship of the Prince of Wales; and would be delighted to see him reduced to nothingness by a removal to the House of Lords. But if it was plain alike to such men of intellect as Walpole and Carteret, and to such stupid men as King George and the Duke of Newcastle, that removal to the House of Lords would mean political extinction for Pulteney, how is it that no thought of the kind seems to have entered into the mind of Pulteney himself? Even as a question of the purest patriotism, such a man as Pulteney, believing his own policy to be for the public good, ought to have sternly refused to allow himself to be forced into any position in which his public influence must be diminished or destroyed. As regarded his personal interests and his fame, Pulteney must have had every motive to induce him to remain in the House where his eloquence and his debating power had won him such a place. It is impossible to believe that he could have been allured just then, at the height of his position and his renown, by the bauble of a coronet which he had twice before refused—contemptuously refused. Probably the real explanation may be found in the fact that Pulteney, for all his fighting capacity, was not a strong but a weak man. Probably he

was, like Goethe's Egmont, brilliant in battle, but weak in council. All unknown to himself, four men, each man possessed of an overmastering power of will, were combined against him for a single purpose—to drive him into the House of Lords—that is, to drive him out of the House of Commons. His enemies prevailed against him. As Lord Chesterfield put it, he “shrank into insignificance and an earldom.” We are far from saying that a man might not be a good Minister and a statesman of influence after having accepted a seat in the House of Lords. But it was beginning to be found, even in Pulteney's time, that the place of a great Prime Minister is in the House of Commons; and certainly the place of a tribune of the people can hardly be the House of Lords. Pulteney was born for the House of Commons: transplantation meant death to a genius like his. When the news of his “promotion” became public, a wild outcry of anger and despair broke from his population of admirers. He was denounced as having committed an act of perfidy and of treason. He had accepted a peerage, it was said, as a bribe to induce him to consent to let Robert Walpole go unimpeached and unpunished. The outcry was quite unjust, but was certainly not unnatural. People wanted some sort of explanation of an act which no ordinary reasoning could possibly explain. Pulteney's conduct bitterly disappointed the Tory section of the Opposition as well as the populace of his former adorers out of doors. Bolingbroke, who had hurried back to England, found that all his dreams of a genuine Coalition Ministry, representing fairly both wings of the forces of Opposition, had vanished with the morning light. Except for the removal of Walpole, hardly any change was made in the composition of recent English administration. The Tories and Jacobites, who had helped so signally in the fight, were left out of the spoils of victory. Bolingbroke found that he was no nearer to power than he would have been if Walpole still were at the head of affairs. Nothing was changed for him; only a stupid man had taken the place of a statesman. Pulteney appears to have acted very generously towards his immediate political colleagues, and to have remained in

the House of Commons, where he now had all the power, until he had got for them the places they desired. Then he was gazetted as Earl of Bath; and we have all heard the famous anecdote of the first meeting in the House of Lords between the man who had been Robert Walpole and the man who had been William Pulteney, and the greeting given by the new Lord Orford to the new Lord Bath: "Here we are, my Lord, the two most insignificant fellows in England." With these words the first great leader of Opposition in the House of Commons, the man who may almost be said to have created the parliamentary part of leader of Opposition, may be allowed to pass out of the political history of his time.

Many attempts were made to impeach Walpole—as we still must call him. Secret committees of enquiry were moved for. Horace Walpole, *the* Horace Walpole, Sir Robert's youngest son, made his first speech in the House of Commons, in defence of his father, against such a motion. A secret committee was at last obtained, but it did not succeed, although composed almost altogether of Walpole's enemies, in bringing out anything very strange or startling against him. Public money had been spent, no doubt, here and there very freely for purely partisan work. There could be no question that some of it had gone in political corruption. But everybody had already felt sure that this had been done, and felt equally sure that it had been done by all ministries and parties. The report of the committee, when it came at last, was received with cold indifference or unconcealed contempt.

Walpole still kept a good deal in touch with the King. George consulted him privately, and indeed with much mystery about the consultations. The King sometimes sent a trusty messenger, who met Walpole at midnight at the house of a friend. It was indeed a summons from George which hastened the great statesman's death. The King wished to consult Walpole, and Walpole hurried up from Houghton for the purpose. The journey greatly increased a malady from which he suffered, and he was compelled by pain to have recourse to heavy doses of opium, which kept him insensible for the greater part of



every day during more than six weeks. When the stupefying effect of the opium was not on him—that is, for some two or three hours each day—he talked with all that former vivacity which of late years seemed to have deserted him. He knew that the end was coming, and he bore the knowledge with characteristic courage. On March 18, 1745, he died at his London house in Arlington Street. Life could have had of late but little charm for him. He had always lived for public affairs and for power. He had none of the gifts of seclusion. Except for his love of pictures, he had no indoor intellectual resources. He could not bury himself in literature as Carteret could do; or, at a later day, Charles James Fox; or, at a later day still, Mr. Gladstone. Walpole's life really came to an end the day he left the House of Commons; the rest was silence. He was only in his sixty-ninth year when he died. It was fitting that he should lose his life in striving to assist and counsel the Sovereign whose family he more than any other man or set of men had seated firmly on the throne of England. His faults were many; his personal virtues perhaps but few. One great and consummate public virtue he certainly had: he was devoted to the interests of his country. In the building of Nelson's ships it was said that the oak of Houghton woods excelled all other timber. Oak from the same woods was used to make musket-stocks for Wellington's soldiers in the long war against Napoleon. Walpole's own fibre was something like that of the oaks which grew on his domain. His policy on two of the most eventful occasions of his life has been amply justified by history. He was right in the principles of his Excise Bill; he was right in opposing the war policy of the Patriots. The very men who had leagued against him in both these instances acknowledged afterwards that he was right and that they were wrong. It was in an evil moment for himself that he yielded to the policy of the Patriots and tried to carry on a war in which he had no sympathy, and from which he had no hope. He was a great statesman; almost, but not quite, a great man.

Not very long before Walpole's death a star of all but the first magnitude had set in the firmament of English

literature. Alexander Pope died on May 30, 1744, at his house in Twickenham, where "Thames' translucent wave shines a broad mirror," to use his own famous words. He died quietly; death was indeed a relief to him from pain which he had borne with a patience hardly to be expected from one of so fitful a temper. Pope's life had been all a struggle against ill-health and premature decrepitude. He was deformed; he was dwarfish; he was miserably weak from his very boyhood; a rude breath of air made him shrink and wither; the very breezes of summer had peril in them for his singularly delicate constitution and ever-quivering nerves. He was but fifty-six years old when death set him free. Life had been for him a splendid success indeed, but the success had been qualified by much bitterness and pain. He was sensitive to the quick; he formed strong friendships, fierce and passionate enmities; and the friendships themselves turned only too often into enmities. Unsparing with the satire of his pen, he made enemies everywhere. He professed to be indifferent to the world's praise or censure, but he was nevertheless morbidly anxious to know what people said of him. He was as egotistic as Rousseau or Byron: but he had none of Byron's manly public spirit and none of Rousseau's exalted love of humanity. Pope's place in English poetry may be taken now as settled. He stands high and stands firmly in the second class: that is, in the class just below Shakespeare and Milton and a very few others. He has been extravagantly censured and extravagantly praised. Byron at one time maintained that he was the greatest English poet, and many vehement arguments have been used to prove that he was not a poet at all. One English critic believed he had settled the question for ever when he described Pope as "a musical rocking-horse." Again and again the world has been told that Pope has disappeared from the sky of literature, but the world looks up, and behold, there is the star shining just as before.

## CHAPTER XXXIV

## "THE FORTY-FIVE"

THIRTY years had come and gone since England had been alarmed, irritated, or encouraged, according to the temper of its political inhabitants, by a Jacobite rising. The personality of James Stuart, the Old Chevalier, was little more than a memory among those clansmen who had rallied round the royal standard at Braemar. In those thirty years James Stuart had lived his melancholy, lonely, evil life of exile, the hanger-on of foreign courts, the half grotesque, half pitiable, sham monarch of a sham court, that was always ready to be moved from place to place with all its cheaply regal accessories, like the company and the properties of some band of strolling players. Now there was a new Stuart in the field, a new sham prince, a "Young Pretender." After the disasters of the Fifteen, James Stuart had become the hero of as romantic a love story as ever wandering prince experienced. He had fallen in love, in the hot, unreasoning Stuart way, with the beautiful Clementine Sobieski, and the beautiful Clementine had returned the passion of the picturesquely unfortunate prince, and they had carried on their love affairs under conditions of greater difficulty than Romeo and Juliet, and had overcome the difficulties and got married, and in 1720 Clementine had borne to the House of Stuart a son and heir. Every precaution was taken to insure the most public recognition of the existence of the newly born prince. It was determined that none of the perplexity, the uncertainty, the suspicion, which attended upon the birth of James, should be permitted to arise now. There must be no *haro* about warming-pans, no accusations of juggling, no possible doubts as to the right of the new-born babe to be regarded as the son of James Stuart and of Clementine Sobieski. The birth took place in Rome, and cardinals accredited from all the great Powers of Europe were present on the occasion to bear witness to it. The city was



alive with such excitement as it had seldom witnessed since the days when pagan Rome became papal Rome. The streets in the vicinity of the house where Clementine Sobieski lay in her pain were choked with the gilt carriages of the proudest Italian nobility; princes of the Church and princes of royal blood thronged the ante-chambers. Gallant gentlemen who bore some of the stateliest names of England and of Scotland waited on the stairways for the tidings that a new prince was given unto their loyalty. Adventurous soldiers of fortune kicked their heels in the courtyard and thought with moistened eyes of the toasts they would drink to their future king. From the Castle of St. Angelo, where long ago the besieged had hurled upon the besiegers the statues that had proved the taste of a Roman emperor, where Rienzi lay yesterday, and where Cagliostro shall lie to-morrow, thunders of artillery saluted the advent of the new rose of the House of Stuart.

In the years that followed, while the young Prince Charles was growing up to his tragic inheritance, it can hardly be maintained, even by the most devoted adherent of the Stuart line, that James showed himself in the slightest degree worthy of the crown towards which he reached. Indeed, his conduct showed a reckless indifference to the means most likely to attain that crown, which it is difficult to account for. When everything depended for the success of his schemes upon the friends he made abroad and the favour he retained at home, he wantonly acted as if his dearest purpose was to alienate the one and to wholly lose the other. His conduct towards his wife, and his persistent and stupid favouritism of the Mar man and woman—especially the woman—drove the injured and indignant Clementine into a convent, and made the great European princes of Spain, Germany, and Rome his adversaries. Spain refused him entrance to the kingdom unaccompanied by his wife; the Pope struck him a heavier blow in diminishing by one-half the income that had hitherto been allowed him from the Papal treasury. But worse than the loss of foreign friends, worse even than the loss of the Sistine subsidy, was the effect which his treatment of his wife produced in the countries which he aspired to rule. His

wisest followers wrote to him that he had done more to injure his cause by his conduct to Clementine than by anything else in his ill-advised career. At last even James took alarm; his stubborn nature was forced to yield; the obnoxious favourites were dismissed, and a reconciliation of a kind was effected between the Stuart King and Queen. But fidelity was a quality difficult enough for James to practise, and when the Queen died in 1735 it is said that she found death not unwelcome.

In the meantime the young Prince Charles grew up to early manhood. Princes naturally begin the world at an earlier age than most men, and Charles may be said to have begun the world in 1734, when, as we have seen, at the age of fourteen, he took part in the siege of Gaeta as a general of artillery, and bore himself, according to overwhelming testimony, as became a soldier. Up to this time his education had been pursued with something like regularity; and if at all times he preferred rowing, riding, hunting, and shooting to graver and more secluded pleasures, he was not in this respect peculiar among young men, princes or otherwise. If, too, he never succeeded in overcoming the difficulties which the spelling of the English language presented, and if his handwriting always remained slovenly and illegible, it must be remembered that in that age spelling was not prized as a pre-eminent accomplishment by exalted persons, and that Charles Stuart could spell quite as well as Marlborough. He knew how to sign his name, and it may be remarked that, though he has passed into the pages of history and the pages of romance as Charles Edward, he himself never signed his name so, but always simply Charles. He was baptized Charles Edward Louis Philip Casimir, and, like his ancestors before him, he chose his first name as his passport through the world. If he had marched to Finchley, if Culloden had gone otherwise than it did go, if any of the many things that might have happened in his favour had come to pass, he would have been Charles the Third of England.

His education was, from a religious point of view, curiously mixed. He was entrusted to the especial care of Murray, Mrs. Hay's brother, and a Protestant, much to

the grief and anger of his mother. But he professed the tenets of the Catholic Church, and satisfied Pope Clement, in an interview when the young Prince was only thirteen, that his Catholic education was sound and complete. For the rest, he was a graceful musician, spoke French, Spanish, and Italian as readily as English, and was skilled in the use of arms. As far as the cultivation of mind or body went, he might fairly be considered to hold his own with any of the preceding sovereigns and princes of the House of Stuart. When in 1737 he set out on a kind of triumphal tour of the great Italian towns, he was received everywhere with enthusiasm, and everywhere made the most favourable impression. So successful was this performance, so popular did the Prince make himself, and so warmly was he received, that the Hanoverian Government took upon itself to be seriously offended, ordered the Venetian ambassador Businiello to leave London, and conveyed to the republic of Genoa its grave disapproval of the republic's conduct. The zealous energy of Mr. Fane, our envoy at Florence, saved that duchy from a like rebuke. Mr. Fane insisted so strongly that no kind of State reception was to be accorded to the travelling Prince that the Grand Duke gave way. Yet the Grand Duke's curiosity to meet Charles Stuart was so great that he had prevailed upon Fane to allow him to meet the stranger on the footing of a private individual; but sudden death carried off the poor Grand Duke before the interview could take place.

When Charles Stuart, as a general of fourteen, was helping to besiege Gaeta, he had been hailed by Don Carlos as Prince of Wales, and as Prince of Wales he was always addressed by those outside the little circle of the sham court who wished to please the exiled princes or show their sympathy with their cause. The young Charles soon began to weary of being Prince of Wales only in name. It seems certain that from a very early age his thoughts were turned to England and the English succession. There is a legend that at Naples once the young Prince's hat blew into the sea, and when some of his companions wished to put forth in a boat and fetch it back he dissuaded them, saying that it was not worth while, as



he would have to go shortly to England to fetch his hat. The legend is in all likelihood true in so far as it represents the bent of the young man's mind. He was sufficiently intelligent to perceive that masquerading through Italian cities and the reception of pseudo-royal honours from petty princes were but a poor counterfeit of the honours that were his, as he deemed, by right divine. So it was only natural that with waxing manhood his eyes and his thoughts turned more often to that England which he had never seen, but which, as he had been so often and often assured, was only waiting for a fit opportunity to cast off the Hanoverian yoke and welcome any lineal descendant of the Charleses and the Jameses of beloved memory.

More than one expedition had been planned, and one expedition had decisively failed, when in the summer of 1745 Prince Charlie sailed from Belleisle on board the *Boutelle*, with the *Elizabeth* as a companion vessel. He started on this expedition on his own responsibility and at his own risk. Murray of Broughton, and other influential Scottish friends, had told him, again and again, that it would be absolutely useless to come to Scotland without a substantial and well-armed following of at least six thousand troops, and a substantial sum of money in his pocket. To ask so much was to ask the impossible. At one time the young Prince had believed that Louis XV. would find him the men and lend him the money, but in 1745 any such hope had entirely left him. He knew now that Louis XV. would do nothing for him; he knew that if he was ever to regain his birthright he must win it with his own wits. It is impossible not to admire the desperate courage of the young aspirant setting out thus lightly to conquer a kingdom with only a handful of men at his back and hardly a handful of money in his pocket. Judging, too, by the course of events and the near approach which the Prince made to success, it is impossible not to accord him considerable praise for that instinct which makes the great soldier and the great statesman, the instinct which counsels when to dare. The very ships in which he was sailing he had got hold of, not only without the connivance, but without the knowledge, of the French Government. They

were obtained through two English residents at Nantes. On August 2 the *Boutelle* anchored off the Hebrides alone. The *Elizabeth* had fallen in with an English vessel, the *Lion*, and had been so severely handled that she was obliged to return to Brest to refit, carrying with her all the arms and ammunition on which Prince Charles had relied for the furtherance of his expedition. So here was the claimant to the crown, friendless and alone, trying his best to derive encouragement from the augury which Tullibardine grandiloquently discerned in the flight of a royal eagle around the vessel. Eagle or no eagle, augury or no augury, the opening of the campaign was gloomy in the extreme. The first clansmen whose aid the Prince solicited were indifferent, reluctant, and obstinate in their indifference and reluctance. Macdonald of Boisdale first, and Clanranald of that ilk afterwards, assured the Prince with little ceremony that without aid, and substantial aid, from a foreign Power, in the shape of arms and fighting-men, no clansman would bare claymore in his behalf. But the eloquence and the determination of the young Prince won over Clanranald and the Macdonalds of Kinloch-Moidart: Charles disembarked and took up his headquarters at Borrodaile farm in Inverness-shire. A kind of legendary fame attaches to the little handful of men who formed his immediate following. The Seven Men of Moidart are as familiar in Scottish Jacobite legend as the Seven Champions of Christendom are to childhood. Tullibardine; Sir Thomas Sheridan, the Prince's tutor; Francis Strickland, an English gentleman; Sir John Macdonald, an officer in the service of Spain; Kelly, a non-juring clergyman; Buchanan, the messenger, and Æneas Macdonald, the banker, made up the mystic tale. Among these Seven Men of Moidart, Æneas Macdonald plays the traitor's part that Ganelon plays in the legends of Charlemagne. He seems to have been actuated, from the moment that the Prince landed on the Scottish shore, by the one desire to bring his own head safely out of the scrape, and to attain that end he seems to have been ready to do pretty well anything. When he was finally taken prisoner he saved himself by the readiness and the com-

pleteness with which he gave his evidence. No more of him. There were, happily for the honour of the adherents of the House of Stuart, few such followers in the Forty-five.

The position of the young Prince was peculiar. His engaging manners had won over many of the chiefs; his presence had set on fire that old Stuart madness which a touch can often kindle in wild Highland hearts; his determination to be a Scotchman among Scotchmen, a determination which set him the desperate task of trying to master the Gaelic speech, insured his hold upon the affections of the rude chivalry whom his presence and his name had already charmed. But some of the greatest clans absolutely refused to come in. Macdonald of Sleat, and Macleod of Macleod, would have none of the "pretended Prince of Wales" and his "madmen."

Though these chieftains were appealed to again and again, they were resolute in their refusal to embark in the Stuart cause. They pledged themselves to the House of Hanover, they accepted commissions in the royal army; the cause of Charles Stuart must sink or swim without them. With them or without them, however, Charles was going on. The number of clans that had come in was quite sufficient to fill him with hope; the little brush at Spean's Bridge between two companies of the Scots Royal under Captain Scott and the clansmen of Keppoch and Lochiel had given the victory to the rebels. The Stuarts had drawn first blood successfully, and the superstitious saw in the circumstance yet another augury of success. The time was now ripe for action. All over the north of Scotland the Proclamation of Prince Charles was scattered. This proclamation called upon all persons to recognise their rightful Sovereign in the young Prince's person as regent for his father, invited all soldiers of King George, by offers of increased rank or increased pay, to desert to the Stuart colours, promised a free pardon and full religious liberty to all who should renounce their allegiance to the usurper, and threatened all who after due warning remained obdurate with grave pains and penalties. Everywhere through the west this document had been seen and studied, had inflamed men's minds and set men's pulses dancing



to old Jacobite tunes. In Edinburgh, in Berwick, in Carlisle, copies had been seen by astonished adherents of the House of Stuart, who were delighted or dismayed, according to their temperaments. Scotland was pretty well aware of the presence of the young Prince by the time that it was resolved to unfurl the flag.

The royal standard of crimson and white was raised by Tullibardine on August 19 in the vale of Glenfinnan, in the presence of Keppoch and Lochiel, Macdonald of Glencoe, Stuart of Appin, and Stuart of Ardshiel, and their clansmen. No such inauspicious omen occurred as that which shook the nerves of the superstitious when James Stuart gave his banner to the winds of Braemar a generation earlier. Indeed, an invading prince could hardly wish for happier conditions under which to begin his enterprise. Not only was he surrounded by faithful clansmen prepared to do or die for the heir to the House of Stuart, but the stately ceremony of setting up the royal standard was witnessed by English prisoners, the servants and the soldiers of King George, the first-fruits of the hoped-for triumph over the House of Hanover. "Go, sir," Charles is reported to have said to one of his prisoners, Captain Swetenham, "go and tell your general that Charles Stuart is coming to give him battle." That element of the theatrical which has always hung about the Stuart cause, and which has in so large a degree given it its abiding charm, was here amply present. For a royal adventurer setting out on a crusade for a kingdom the opening chapter of the enterprise was undoubtedly auspicious reading.

## CHAPTER XXXV

### THE MARCH SOUTH

THE condition of Scotland at the time of the Prince's landing was such as in a great degree to favour a hostile invasion. Even educated Englishmen then knew much less about Scotland, or at least the Highlands of Scotland,

than their descendants do to-day of Central Africa. People—the few daringly adventurous people—who ventured to travel in the Highlands were looked upon by their admiring friends as the rivals of Bruce or Mandeville, and they wrote books about their travels as they would have done if they had travelled in Thibet, and very curious reading these books are now after the lapse of something over a century. The whole of the Highlands were wild, unfrequented, and desolate, under the rude jurisdiction of the heads of the great Highland houses, whose clansmen, as savage and as desperately courageous as Sioux or Pawnees, offered their lords an almost idolatrous devotion. Nominally the clans were under the authority of the English Crown and the Scottish law; actually they recognised no rule but the rule of their chiefs, who wielded a power as despotic as that of any feudal seigneur in the days of the Old *Régime*. The heroes of the Ossianic poems—the Finns and Dermats whom colonisation had transplanted from Irish to Scottish legend—were not more unfettered or more antiquely chivalrous than the clansmen who boasted of their descent from them. Scotland was more unlike England in the middle of the last century than Russia is unlike Sicily to-day.

There were several things in Charles's favour. To begin with, the disarmament of the clans, which had been insisted upon after the "Fifteen," had been carried out in such a fashion as was now to prove most serviceable to Charles Stuart; for the only clans that had been really disarmed were the Mackays, Campbells, and Sutherlands, who were loyal enough to the House of Hanover, and gave up their weapons very readily to prove their loyalty. But the other clans—the clans that ever cherished the lingering hope of a Stuart restoration—were not in reality disarmed at all. They made a great show of surrendering to General Wade weapons that were utterly worthless as weapons of war, honeycombed, crippled old guns and swords and axes. But the good guns and swords and axes, the serviceable weapons, these were all carefully stowed away in fitting places of concealment, ready for the hour when they might be wanted again. That hour had now come. So that, thanks to the Disarming Act of 1716, the Government

found its chief allies in the north of Scotland practically defenceless and unarmed, while the clans that kept pouring in to rally around the standard of the young invader were as well armed as any of those who had fought so stoutly at Sheriffmuir. Yet another advantage on the adventurer's side was due to the tardiness with which news travelled in those times. Charles had been for many days in the Highlands, preparing the way for the rising, before rumours of anything like an accredited kind came to the court of St. James's. The highlands and islands of Scotland were then so far removed from the great world of government that it had taken something like half a year on one occasion before the dwellers in the stormy Shetlands had learned that their Sovereign, King William the Third, was dead and buried ; and in the years that had elapsed since William of Orange passed away the means of communication between London and the far north were little if at all better. Charles had actually raised his standard and rallied clan after clan around him before the Government in London could seriously believe that a Stuart in arms was in the island. There were other and minor elements of success, too, to be noted in the great game that the Stuart Prince was playing. The Ministry was unpopular : the head of that Ministry was the imbecile Duke of Newcastle, perhaps the most contemptible statesman who has ever made high office ridiculous. The King was away in Hanover. England was in the toils of a foreign war, and her prestige had lately suffered heavily from the sudden defeat at Fontenoy. There were very few troops in England to employ against an invasion, and the Scottish commander-in-chief, Sir John Cope, whose name lives in unenviable fame in the burden of many a Jacobite ballad, was as incapable a well-meaning general as ever was called upon to face a great unexpected emergency. It must be admitted that all these were excellent points in the Prince's favour, and that they counted for much in the conduct of the campaign.

From the first young Charles Stuart might well have come to regard himself as the favourite of fortune. The history of the Forty-five divides itself into two distinct parts : the first a triumphant record of brilliant victories



and the picture of a young Prince marching through conquest after conquest to a crown ; the second part prefaced by a disastrous resolution, leading to overwhelming defeat, and ending in ignominious flight and the extinction of the last Stuart hope. From the moment when the Stuart standard fluttered its folds of white and crimson on the Highland wind it seemed as if the Stuart luck had turned. Charles might well conceive himself happy. Upon his sword sat laurel victory. Smooth success was strewn before his feet. The blundering and bewildered Cope actually allowed Charles and his army to get past him. Cope was neither a coward nor a traitor, but he was a terrible blunderer, and while the English general was marching upon Inverness Charles was triumphantly entering Perth. From Perth the young Prince, with hopeless, helpless Cope still in his rear, marched on Edinburgh.

The condition of Edinburgh was peculiar : although a large proportion of its inhabitants, especially those who were well-to-do, were staunch supporters of the House of Hanover, there were plenty of Jacobites in the place, and it only needed the favour of a few victories to bring into open day a great deal of latent Jacobitism that was for the moment prudently kept under by its possessors. The Lord Provost himself was more than suspected of being a Jacobite at heart. The city was miserably defended. Such walls as it possessed were more ornamental than useful, and in any case were sadly in want of repair. All the military force it could muster to meet the advance of the clans was the small but fairly efficient body of men who formed the town guard ; the train bands, some thousand strong, who knew no more than so many spinsters of the division of a battle ; the small and undisciplined Edinburgh regiment ; and a scratch collection of volunteers hurriedly raked together from among the humbler citizens of the town, and about as useful as so many puppets to oppose to the daring and the ferocity of the clans. Edinburgh opinion had changed very rapidly with regard to that same daring and ferocity. When the first rumours of the Prince's advance were bruited abroad, the adherents of the House of Hanover in Edinburgh made very merry over the gang

of ragged rascals, hen-roost robbers, and drunken rogues upon whom the Pretender relied in his effort to "enjoy his ain again." But as the clans came nearer and nearer, as the air grew thicker with flying rumours of the successes that attended upon the Prince's progress, as the capacity of the town seemed weaker for holding out, and as the prospect of reinforcements seemed to grow fainter and fainter, the opinion of Hanoverian Edinburgh concerning the clans changed mightily. Had the Highlanders been a race of giants, endowed with more than mortal prowess, and invulnerable as Achilles, they could hardly have struck more terror into the hearts of loyal and respectable Edinburgh citizens.

Still there were some stout hearts in Edinburgh who did their best to keep up the courage of the rest and to keep out the enemy. Andrew Fletcher and Duncan Forbes were of the number. M'Laurin, the mathematician, turned his genius to the bettering of the fortifications. Old Dr. Stevenson, bedridden but heroic, kept guard in his arm-chair for many days at the Netherbow Gate. The great question was, would Cope come in time? Cope was at Aberdeen. Cope had put his army upon transports. Cope might be here to-morrow, the day after to-morrow, to-day, who knows? But in the meantime the King's Dragoons, whom Cope had left behind him when he first started out to meet the Pretender, had steadily and persistently retreated before the Highland advance. They had now halted—they can hardly be said to have made a stand—at Corstorphine, some three miles from Edinburgh, and here it was resolved to do something to stay the tide of invasion. Hamilton's Dragoons were at Leith. These were ordered to join the King's Dragoons at Corstorphine, and to collect as many Edinburgh volunteers as they could on their way. Inside the walls of Edinburgh it was easy enough to collect volunteers, and quite a little army of them marched out with drums beating and colours flying at the heels of Hamilton's Dragoons. But on the way to the town gates the temper of the volunteers changed, and by the time that the town gates were reached and passed the volunteers had dwindled to so pitiable a handful that they

were dismissed, and Hamilton's Dragoons proceeded alone to join Cope's King's Dragoons at Corstorphine.

But the united force of Dragoons did not stay long at Corstorphine. The fame of the fierce Highlanders had unhinged their valour, and it only needed a few of the Prince's supporters to ride within pistol-shot and discharge their pieces at the royal troops to set them into as disgraceful a panic as ever animated frightened men. The Dragoons, ludicrously unmanned, turned tail and rode for their lives, rode without drawing bridle and without staying spur till they came to Leith, paused there for a little, and then, on some vague hint that the Highlanders were on their track, they were in the saddle again and riding for their lives, once more. Dismayed Edinburgh citizens saw them sweep along what now is Princes Street, a pitiable sight; saw them, bloody with spurring, fiery hot with haste, ride on—on into the darkness. On and on the desperate cowards scampered sheeplike in their shameful fear, till they reached Dunbar, and behind its gates allowed themselves to breathe more freely and to congratulate themselves upon the dangers they had escaped. Such is the story of the famous, or infamous, "Canter of Coltbrigg," one of the most disgraceful records of the abject collapse of regular troops before the terror of an almost unseen foe that are to be found in history. Well might loyal Edinburgh despair if such were its best defenders. The town was all tumult, the Loyalists were in utter gloom, the secretly exulting Jacobites were urging the impossibility of resistance, and the necessity for yielding while yielding was still an open question.

On the top of all this came a summons from the Prince demanding the immediate surrender of the city. A deputation was at once despatched to Gray's Mill, where the Prince had halted, to confer with him. Scarcely had the deputation gone when rumour spread abroad in the town that Cope, Cope the long-expected, the almost given up, was actually close at hand, and the weathercock emotions of the town veered to a new quarter. Perhaps they might be able to hold out after all. The great thing was to gain time. The deputation came back to say that Prince



Charles must have a distinct answer to his summons before two o'clock in the morning, and it was now ten at night. Still spurred by the hope of gaining time and allowing Cope to arrive, if, indeed, he were arriving, the deputation was sent back again. But the Prince refused to see them, and the deputation returned to the city, and all unconsciously decided the fate of Edinburgh. Lochiel and Murray, with some five hundred Camerons, had crept close to the walls under the cover of the darkness of the night, in the hope of finding some means of surprising the city. Hidden close by the Netherbow Port, they saw the coach which had carried the deputation home drive up and demand admittance. The admittance, which was readily granted to the coach, could not well be refused to the Highlanders who leaped up the moment the doors were opened, overpowered the guard, and entered the town. Edinburgh awoke in the morning to find its doubts at an end. It was in the hands of the Highlanders.

Jacobite Edinburgh went wild with delight over its hero Prince. He entered Holyrood with the white rose in his bonnet and the star of Saint Andrew on his breast, through enthusiastic crowds that fought eagerly for a nearer sight of his face or the privilege of touching his hand. The young Prince looked his best; the hereditary melancholy which cast its shadow over the faces of all the Stuarts was for the moment dissipated. Flushed with easy triumph, popular applause, and growing hope, the young Prince entered the palace of his ancestors like a king returning to his own. James Hepburn of Keith with drawn sword led the way; beautiful women distributed white cockades to enraptured Jacobites; the stateliest chivalry of Scotland made obeisance to its rightful prince. The intoxicating day ended with a great ball at the palace, at which the youthful grace of Charles Stuart confirmed the charm that already belonged to the adventurous and victorious Prince of Wales. September 17, 1745, was one of the brightest days in the Stuart calendar.

The conquest of Edinburgh was but the prelude to greater glories. Cope was rallying his forces at Dunbar, was marching to the relief of Edinburgh. Charles, acting

on the advice of his generals, marched out to meet him. Cope's capacity for blundering was by no means exhausted. He affected a contemptuous disregard for his foes, delayed attack in defiance of the advice of his wisest generals; was taken unawares in the grey morning of the 21st at Preston Pans, and routed completely and ignominiously in five minutes.

Seldom has it been the misfortune of an English general to experience so thorough, so humiliating a defeat. The wild charges of the Highland men broke up the ordered ranks of the English troops in hopeless confusion; almost all the infantry was cut to pieces, and the cavalry only escaped by desperate flight. Cope's dragoons were accustomed to flight by this time; the clatter of their horses' hoofs as they cantered from Coltbrigg was still in their ears, and as they once again tore in shameless flight up the Edinburgh High Street they might well have reflected upon the rapidity with which such experiences repeated themselves. General Preston of the Castle refused to admit the cowards within his gate, so there was nothing for them but to turn their horses' heads again and spur off into the west country. As for Cope, he managed to collect some ragged remnant of his ruined army about him, and to make off with all speed to Berwick, where he was received by Lord Mark Ker with the scornful assurance that he was the first commander-in-chief in Europe who had brought with him the news of his own defeat.

The victorious army were unable, if they had wished, to follow up the flight, owing to their lack of cavalry. They remained on the field to ascertain their own losses and to count their spoil. The losses were trifling, the gain was great. Only thirty Highlanders were killed, only seventy wounded, in that astonishing battle. As for the gain, not merely were the honourable trophies of victory, the colours and the standards, left in the Highland hands, but the artillery and the supplies, with some two thousand pounds in money, offered the Prince's troops a solid reward for their daring. It is to the credit of Charles that, after the fury of attack was over, he insisted upon the wounded enemy and the prisoners being treated with all humanity. An incident

is told of him which brings into relief the better qualities of his race. One of his officers, pointing to the ghastly field, all strewn with dead bodies, with severed limbs and mutilated trunks, said to the Prince, "Sir, behold your enemies at your feet." The Prince sighed. "They are my father's subjects," he said sadly as he turned away.

The battle of Preston Pans is enshrined in Jacobite memories as the battle of Gladsmuir, for a reason very characteristic of the Stuarts and their followers. Some queer old book of prophecies had foretold more than a century earlier that there should be a battle at Gladsmuir. The battle of Preston Pans was not fought really on Gladsmuir at all: Gladsmuir lies a good mile away from the scene of Charles's easy triumph and Cope's inglorious rout. But for enthusiastic Jacobite purposes it was near enough to seem an absolute fulfilment of the venerable prediction. A battle was to be fought at Gladsmuir; go to, then—a battle was fought at Gladsmuir, or near Gladsmuir, which is very much the same thing: anyhow, not very far away from Gladsmuir. And so the Jacobites were contented, and more than ever convinced of the advantages of prophecy in the affairs of practical politics.

Some busy days were passed in Edinburgh in which councils of war alternated with semi-regal entertainments, and in which the Prince employed his ready command of language in paying graceful compliments to the pretty women who wore the white cockade, and in issuing proclamations in which the Union was dissolved and religious liberty promised. One thing the young Prince could not be induced to do; none of the arguments of his councillors could prevail upon him to threaten severe measures against the prisoners fallen into his hands. It was urged that, unless the Government treated their prisoners as prisoners of war and not as rebels, the Prince would be well advised to retaliate by equal harshness to the captives in his power. But on this point the Prince was obdurate. He would not take in cold blood the lives that he had saved in the heat of action. Then and all through this meteoric campaign the conduct of Charles was characterised by a sincere humanity, which stands out in startling contrast with the



cruelties practised later by his enemy, the "butcher Cumberland." It prevented the Prince from gaining an important military advantage by the reduction of Edinburgh Castle. He attempted the reduction of the Castle by cutting off its supplies, but when the general in command threatened to open fire upon the town in consequence Charles immediately rescinded the order, although his officers urged that the destruction of a few houses, and even the loss of a few lives, was in a military sense of scant importance in comparison with the capture of so valuable a stronghold as Edinburgh Castle. The Prince held firmly to his resolve, and Edinburgh Castle remained to the end in the hands of the royal troops. Charles displayed a great objection, too, to any plundering or lawless behaviour on the part of his wild Highland army. We learn from the Bland Burges papers that when the house of Lord Somerville, who was opposed to the Prince, was molested by a party of Highlanders, the Prince, on hearing of it, sent an apology to Lord Somerville, and an officer's guard to protect him from further annoyance.

But time was running on, and it was necessary to take action again. England was waking up to a sense of its peril. Armies were gathering. The King had come back from Hanover, the troops were almost all recalled from Flanders. It was time to make a fresh stroke. Charles resolved upon the bold course of striking south at once for England, and early in November he marched. He set off on the famous march south. In this undertaking as before the same extraordinary good fortune attended upon the Stuart arms. His little army of less than six thousand men reached Carlisle, reached Manchester, without opposition. On December 4 he was at Derby, only one hundred and twenty-seven miles from London. Once again, by skill or by good fortune, he had contrived to slip past the English general sent out to bar his way. Cumberland with his forces was at Stafford, nine miles farther from the capital than the young Prince, who was now only six days from the city, with all his hopes and his ambitions ahead of him, and behind him the hostile army of the general he had eluded. Never perhaps in the history of warfare did an

invader come so near the goal of his success and throw it so wantonly away. For that is what Charles did. With all that he had come for apparently within his reach, he did not reach out to take it; the crown of England was in the hollow of his hand, and he opened his hand and let the prize fall from it. It is difficult to understand now what curious madness prompted the Prince's advisers to counsel him as they did, or the Prince to act upon their counsels. He was in the heart of England; he was hard by the capital, which he would have to reach if he was ever to mount the throne of his fathers. He had a devoted army with him—it would seem as if he had only to advance and to win—and yet, with a fatuity which makes the student of history gasp, he actually resolved to retreat, and did retreat. It is true, and must not be forgotten, that Charles did not know, and could not know, all his advantages; that many of the most urgent arguments for advance could not present themselves to his mind. He could not know the panic in which Hanoverian London was cast; he could not know that desperate thoughts of joining the Stuart cause were crossing the craven mind of the Duke of Newcastle; he could not know that the frightened *bourgeoisie* were making a maddened rush upon the Bank of England; he could not know that the King of England had stored all his most precious possessions on board of yachts that waited for him at the Tower stairs, ready at a moment's notice to carry him off again into the decent obscurity of the Electorship of Hanover. He could not know the exultation of the metropolitan Jacobites; he could not know the perturbation of the Hanoverian side; he could not know the curious apathy with which a large proportion of the people regarded the whole proceeding, people who were as willing to accept one king as another, and who would have witnessed with absolute unconcern George the Elector scuttling away from Tower Stairs at one end of the town, while Charles the Prince entered it from another. These factors in his favour he did not know, could not know, could hardly be expected even to guess.

That the news of the rising produced very varied emotions in London we may learn from the letters of Horace Walpole.

In one of September 6, to Sir Horace Mann, mixed with much important information concerning "My Lady O" and the Walpole promise of marriage "to young Churchill," comes news of the Pretender's march past General Cope, and very gloomy forebodings for the result. Another letter, which talks of the Pretender as "the Boy" and of King George "as the *person* most concerned," presents the Hanoverian Elector as making very little of the invasion, answering all the alarms of his Ministers by "Pho, don't talk to me of that stuff." Walpole's spirits had risen within the week, for he is much amused by the story that "every now and then a Scotchman comes and pulls the Boy by the sleeve, 'Preence, here is another mon taken,' then, with all the dignity in the world, the Boy hopes nobody was killed in the action."

London at large vacillated very much as Horace Walpole vacillated. While on the one side Jacobites began to come out of the corners in which they had long lain concealed, and to air their opinions in the free sunlight, rejoicing over the coming downfall of the House of Hanover, authority, on the other hand, busied itself in ordering all known Papists to leave the capital, in calling out the train bands, in frequently and foolishly shutting the gates of Temple Bar, and, which was better and wiser, in making use of Mr. Henry Fielding to write stinging satires upon the Pretender and his party, and hint at the sufferings which were likely to fall upon London when the Highlanders imported their national complaint into the capital. A statesman is reported to have said that this disagreeable jest about the itch was worth two regiments of horse to the cause of the Government.

Yet, if London was excited, there was a tranquil London as well. Mr. George Augustus Sala in that brilliant novel of his, "The Adventures of Captain Dangerous," draws a vivid picture of this London with the true artist touch. "Although from day to day we people in London knew not whether before the sunset the dreaded pibrochs of the Highland clans might not be heard at Charing Cross—although, for aught men knew, another month, nay, another week, might see King George the Second toppled from his



throne—yet to those who lived quiet lives and kept civil tongues in their heads all things went on pretty much as usual. . . . That there was consternation at St. James's, with the King meditating flight, and the royal family in tears and swooning, did not save the little schoolboy a whipping if he knew not his lesson after morning call. . . . So, while all the public were talking about the rebellion, all the world went nevertheless to the playhouses, where they played loyal pieces, and sang 'God save great George, our King' every night; as also to balls, ridottos, clubs, masquerades, drums, routs, concerts, and Pharaoh parties. They read novels and flirted their fans, and powdered and patched themselves, and distended their petticoats with hoops, just as though there were no such persons in the world as the Duke of Cumberland and Charles Edward Stuart." Fiction, that most faithful and excellent handmaiden of history, here shows us no doubt very vividly what London as a whole thought and did in face of the Rebellion. It is an old story. Were not the Romans in the theatre when the Goths came over the hills? Did not the theatres flourish, never better, during the Reign of Terror?

Nor was London the only place which displayed a well-nigh stoical indifference to the progress of the rebellion. If Oxford had a good deal of Jacobitism hidden decorously away in its ancient colleges, if there were a good many disloyal toasts drunk in the seclusion of scholastic rooms, there was apparently only a feeling of curious indifference at the rival university, for Gray has put it on record that at Cambridge "they had no more sense of danger than if it were the battle of Cannæ," and we learn that some grave Dons actually were thinking of driving to Camford to see the Scotch troops march past, "as though they were volunteers out for a sham fight, or a circus procession."

## CHAPTER XXXVI

## CULLODEN—AND AFTER

THE Prince did not know, and could not know, the exact condition of things in the capital ; did not know, and could not know, how many elements of that condition told in his favour, and how many against. But what he could know, what he did know, was this. He was at the head of a devoted army, which if it was small had hitherto found its career marked by triumph after triumph. He was in the heart of England, and had already found that the Stuart war-cry was powerful enough to rally many an English gentleman to his standard. Sir Walter Williams Wynn, whom men called the King of Wales, was on his way to join the Prince of Wales. So was Lord Barrymore, the member of Parliament ; so was many another gallant gentleman of name, of position, of wealth. Manchester had given him the heroic, the ill-fated, James Dawson, and a regiment three hundred strong. Lord James Drummond had landed at Montrose with men, money, and supplies. The Young Chevalier's troops were eager to advance ; they were flushed with victories ; their hearts were high ; they believed, in the wild Gaelic way, in the sanctity of their cause, they believed that the Lord of Hosts was on their side, and such a belief strengthened their hands. For a prince seeking his principality it would seem that there was one course, and one only, to pursue. He might go on and take it, and win the great game he played for ; or, failing that, he might die as became a royal gentleman, sword in hand and fighting for his rights. The might-have-beens are indeed for the most part a vanity, but we can fairly venture to assert now that if Charles had pushed on he would, for the time at least, have restored the throne of England to the House of Stuart. We may doubt, and doubt with reason, whether any fortuitous succession of events could have confirmed the Stuart hold upon the English crown ; but we can scarcely doubt that the hold

would have been for the time established, that the Old Pretender would have been King James the Third, and that George the Elector would have been posting bag and baggage to the rococo shades of Herrenhausen. But, as we have said, failing that, if Charles had fallen in battle at the head of his defeated army, how much better that end would have been than the miserable career which was yet to lend no tragic dignity to the prolonged, pitiful, pitiable life of the Young Pretender!

However, for good or evil, the insane decision was made. Charles's council of war were persistent in their arguments for retreat. There were thirty thousand men in the field against them. If they were defeated they would be cut to pieces, and the Prince, if he escaped slaughter, would only escape it to die as a rebel on Tower Hill, whereas, if they were once back in Scotland, they would find new friends, new adherents, and, even if they failed to win the English crown, might at least count, with reasonable security, upon converting Scotland, as of old, into a separate kingdom with a Stuart king on its throne. By arguments such as these the Prince's officers caused him to throw away the one chance he had of gaining all that he had crossed the seas to gain.

It is only fair to remember that the young Prince himself was from first to last in favour of the braver course of boldly advancing upon London. When his too prudent counsellors told him that if he advanced he would be in Newgate in a fortnight, he still persisted in pressing his own advice. Perhaps he thought that where the stake was so great, and the chance of success not too forbidding, failure might as well end in Newgate as in the purlieus of petty foreign courts. But, with the exception of his Irish officers, he had nobody on his side. The Duke of Perth and Sir John Gordon had a little plan of their own. They thought that a march into Wales would be a good middle course to adopt, but their suggestion found no backers. All Charles's other counsellors were to a man in favour of retreat, and Charles, after at first threatening to regard as traitors all who urged such a course, at last gave way. Sullenly he issued the disastrous order to retreat, sullenly he rode in the rear of



that retreat, assuming the bearing of a man who is no longer responsible for failure. The cheery good-humour, the bright heroism, which had so far characterised him, he had now completely lost, and he rode, a dejected, a despairing, almost a doomed man, among his disheartened followers. It is dreary reading the record of that retreat. Yet it is starred by some bright episodes. At Clifton there was an engagement where the retreating Highlanders held their own, and inflicted a distinct defeat upon Cumberland's army. Again, when they were once more upon Scottish soil, they struck a damaging blow at Hawley's army at Falkirk. But the end came at last on the day when the dwindling, discouraged, retreating army tried its strength with Cumberland at Culloden.

Men of the Cumberland type are to be found in all ages, and in the history of all nations. Men in whom the beast is barely under the formal restraint of ordered society, men in whom a savage sensuality is accompanied by a savage cruelty, men who take a hideous physical delight in bloodshed, darken the pages of all chronicles. It would be unjust to the memory of Cumberland to say that in his own peculiar line he had many, if any, superiors ; that many men are more worthy of the fame which he won. To be remembered with a just loathing as a man by whom brutalities of all kinds were displayed, almost to the point of madness, is not the kind of memory most men desire ; it is probably not the kind of memory that even Cumberland himself desired to leave behind him. But, if he had cherished the ambition of handing down his name to other times "linked with one virtue and a thousand crimes," if he had deliberately proposed to force himself upon the attention of posterity as a mere abominable monster, he could hardly have acted with more persistent determination towards such a purpose. In Scotland, for long years after he was dead and dust, the mention of his name was like a curse. and even in England, where the debt due to his courage counted for much, no one has been found to palliate his conduct or to whitewash his infamy. As Butcher Cumberland he was known while he lived ; as Butcher Cumberland he will be remembered so long as men remember the "Forty-five"

and the horrors after Culloden fight. Some of those horrors no doubt were due to the wild fury of revenge that always follows a wild fear. The invasion of the young Stuart had struck terror: the revenge for that terror was bloodily taken.

Everything contributed to make Culloden fatal to the fortunes of the Pretender. The discouragement of some of the clans, the disaffection of others, the wholesale desertions which had thinned the ranks of the rebel army, the Prince's sullen distrust of his advisers, the position of the battle-field, the bitter wintry weather, which drove a blinding hail and snow into the eyes of the Highlanders, all these were so many elements of danger that would have seriously handicapped a better-conditioned army than that which Charles Stuart was able to oppose to Cumberland. But the Prince's army was not well conditioned; it was demoralised by retreat, hungry, ragged, dizzy with lack of sleep. Even the terrors of the desperate Highland attack were no longer so terrible to the English troops. Cumberland had taught his men, in order to counteract the defence which the target offered to the bodies of the Highlanders, to thrust with their bayonets in a slanting direction—not against the man immediately opposite to its point, but at the unguarded right side of the man attacking their comrade on the right.

After enduring for some time the terrible cannonade of the English, the battle began when the Macintoshes charged with all their old desperate valour upon the English. But the English were better prepared than before, and met the onslaught with such a volley as shattered the Highland attack and literally matted the ground with Highland bodies. Then the royal troops advanced, and drove the rebels in helpless rout before them. The fortunes of the fight might have gone very differently if all the Highlanders had been as true to their cause as those who formed this attacking right wing. "English gold and Scotch traitors," says an old ballad of another fight, "won . . . , but no Englishman." To no English gold can the defeat of Culloden be attributed, but unhappily Scotch treason played its part in the disaster. The Macdonalds had been placed at the left

wing of the battle instead of at the right, which they considered to be their proper place. Furious at what they believed to be an insult, they took no part whatever in the fight after they had discharged a single volley, but stood and looked on in sullen apathy while the left wing and centre of the Prince's army were being whirled into space by the Royalist advance. The Duke of Perth appealed desperately and in vain to their hearts, reminded them of their old-time valour, and offered, if they would only follow his cry of Claymore, to change his name and be henceforward called Macdonald. In vain Keppoch rushed forward almost alone, and met his death, moaning that the children of his tribe had deserted him. There are few things in history more tragic than the picture of that inert mass of moody Highlanders, frozen into traitors through an insane pride and savage jealousy, witnessing the ruin of their cause and the slaughter of their comrades unmoved, and listening impassively to the entreaties of the gallant Perth and the death-groans of the heroic Keppoch. In a few minutes the battle was over, the rout was complete; the rebel army was in full retreat, with a third of its number lying on the field of battle; the Duke of Cumberland was master of the field, of all the Highland baggage and artillery, of fourteen stands, and more than two thousand muskets. Culloden was fought and won.

It is not necessary to believe the stories that have been told of Charles Stuart, attributing to him personal cowardice on the fatal day of Culloden. The evidence in favour of such stories is of the slightest; there is nothing in the Prince's earlier conduct to justify the accusation, and there is sufficient evidence in favour of the much more likely version that Charles was with difficulty prevented from casting away his life in one desperate charge when the fortune of the day was decided. It is part of a Prince's business to be brave, and if Charles Stuart had been lacking in that essential quality of sovereignty he could scarcely have concealed the want until the day of Culloden, or have inspired the clans with the personal enthusiasm which they so readily evinced for him. Nor is it necessary for us to follow out in full the details of the unhappy young man's



miserable flight and final escape. Through all those stormy and terrible days, over which poetry and romance have so often and so fondly lingered, the fugitive found that he had still in the season of his misfortune friends as devoted as he had known in the hours of his triumph. His adventures in woman's dress, his escape from the English ship, the touching devotion of Flora Macdonald, the loyalty of Lochiel, the fidelity of Cluny Macpherson, all these things have been immortalised in a thousand tales and ballads, and will be remembered in the North Country so long as tales and ballads continue to charm. At last, at Loch-nanuagh, the Prince embarked upon a French ship that had been sent for him, and early in the October of 1746 he landed in Brittany.

The horrors that followed Culloden suggest more the blood feuds of some savage tribes than the results of civilised warfare. Cumberland, flushed by a victory that was as unexpected as it was easy, was resolved to kill, and not to scotch, the snake of Jacobite insurrection. The flying rebels were hotly pursued, no quarter was given; the wounded on the field of battle were left cold in their wounds for two days, and then mercilessly butchered. There is a story, which might well be true, and which tells that as Cumberland was going over the field of dead and dying, he saw a wounded Highlander staring at him. Cumberland immediately turned to the officer next to him, and ordered him to shoot the wounded man. The officer, with an honourable courage and dignity, answered that he would rather resign his commission than obey. The officer of the story was the heroic Wolfe, who was afterwards to become a famous general and die gloriously before Quebec. It may be true; we may hope that it is, as it adds another ornament to the historic decoration of a brave man—but history does not, so far as we are aware, record the answer that Cumberland made to this unexpected display of audacious humanity.

The cruelties of Culloden field were only the preface to the red reign of terror that Cumberland set up in the Highlands. The savage temper of the royal general found excellent instruments in the savage tempers of his soldiery.

Murder, rape, torture, held high carnival ; men were hanged or shot on the slightest suspicion or on no suspicion ; women were insulted, outraged, killed ; even children were not safe from the blood-lust of Cumberland's murderers.

The pacification of the Highlands was accomplished on much the same methods as were afterwards employed to bring about the pacification of Poland. Perhaps the most dramatically tragic of all the events after the defeat of Charles Stuart are connected with the fate of those of his adherents who were taken prisoners, and who were of too grave an importance to be put to the sword at once or hanged out of hand. Some, unhappily, of the followers of the young Prince proved themselves to be unworthy of any cause of any monarch. Aeneas Macdonald, John Murray of Broughton, Lord Elcho, and Macdonald of Barrisdale have left behind them the infamous memory that always adheres to traitors. The revelations which John Murray made to save his own life were the means of sending many a gallant gentleman to Tower Hill.

In the end of the July of 1746 Westminster Hall was brilliant with scarlet hangings, and crowded with an illustrious company, to witness the trial of the three most important of the captured rebels—Lord Kilmarnock, Lord Cromarty, and Lord Balmerino. Walpole, who went to that ceremony with the same amused interest that he took in the first performance of a new play, has left a very living account of the scene—Lord Kilmarnock, tall, slender, refined, faultlessly dressed, looking less than his years, which were a little over forty, and inspiring a most astonishing passion in the inflammable heart of Lady Townshend ; Lord Cromarty, of much the same age, but of less gallant bearing, dejected, sullen, and even tearful ; Balmerino, the very type and model of a gallant, careless old soldier.

There was no question of the prisoners' guilt ; they were tried, were found guilty, were sentenced to death. Two of the prisoners had, however, many powerful friends : Kilmarnock and Cromarty ; and the charm of Kilmarnock's presence had raised up for him many more friends, whose influence was exerted with the King. For Balmerino nobody seems to have taken the trouble to

plead, and even King George, whose clemency was not conspicuously displayed in his treatment of his prisoners, appears to have expressed some surprise at this, though he did not allow his regret to carry him so far as to extend his pardon to the stout old soldier. The exertions of Lord Cromarty's friends, and especially of Lady Cromarty, saved that prisoner's life. It is said that when the child which Lady Cromarty bore in her body during the terrible period in which she was pleading for her husband's life came into the world it carried a mark like the stroke of the executioner's axe upon its neck. Kilmarnock and Balmerino died on Tower Hill on August 18, 1746. Both died, as they had lived, like gentlemen and brave soldiers. It is perhaps to be regretted that Kilmarnock should on the scaffold have expressed any regret for the part he had played in supporting the Young Pretender against the House of Hanover. He had gone gallantly into the game of insurrection, and he might as well have played it out to the end. At least he was the only one of all the seven-and-seventy rebels who were executed, from James Dawson to Simon Lovat, who made upon the scaffold any retractation of the acts that he had done. It is impossible not to contrast Balmerino's dying words, and to like them better than the apologies of Kilmarnock. Balmerino was no subject of King George; he was his Prince's man. "If I had a thousand lives I would give them all for him" were his dying words, and braver dying words were never spoken. It was the old heroic spirit of absolute loyalty to the anointed king which was of necessity dying out; which was to be repeated again half a century later in the hills and the forests of La Vendée. The Stuarts were as bad, as worthless, as kings could well be, but they did possess the royal prerogative of inspiring men with an extraordinary devotion. There was something to be said for the cause which could send a man like Balmerino so gallantly to his death, with such a brave piece of soldierly bluster upon his dying lips.

A very different man died for the same cause upon the same scaffold a little later. History hardly recalls a baser



figure than that of Simon Fraser Lord Lovat. He is remembered chiefly as the desperate shufiler and paltry traitor who tried to blow hot and cold, to fawn on Hanover with one hand and to beckon the Stuarts with the other. But his whole career was of a piece with its paltry ending. His youth and manhood were characterised by a kind of savage lawlessness like that of a Calabrian chieftain brigand or the brave of a Sioux band. He was cruel, he was cunning ; he was, in his wild Highland way, a voluptuary and a debauchee ; he was treacherous and hideously selfish. In his earlier days he had cast his eyes upon a lady, whom, for motives of worldly advantage as well as for her beauty, he had regarded as suitable to make his wife. Neither the young lady nor the young lady's family would listen to the suit of Captain Fraser, as he then was ; whereupon Captain Fraser gathered together a select company of scoundrels, carried the young lady off by force, very much as Rob Roy's wild son did with the girl of whom he was enamoured, married her against her will by force with the aid of a suborned priest, actually, so the story goes, cutting the clothes off her body with his dirk while his pipers in obedience to his orders drowned the poor creature's cries with their music. Now in the eightieth year of his age he had come to his grim end. He had broken most of the laws of earth and of heaven ; he had ever tried to be in with both sides and to cheat both ; he was always ready to betray and lie and cozen ; seldom perhaps did a more horrible old man meet a more deserved doom. Yet he died with a bravery and a composure which were not to be expected. Nothing in his life became him like to the leaving it. Thanks to the genius of William Hogarth, we all know exactly how Simon Fraser, the bad Lord Lovat, looked in those last days of his life when he lay in prison, his old body weak with many infirmities, and his old spirit still scheming and hoping for the reprieve that did not come. On April 9 he was executed on Tower Hill. His latest words were grotesquely inappropriate to his evil life. With his lying lips he repeated the famous line from Horace, "*Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*," and with that lie on his lips he knelt

before the block and had his head cut off at one stroke. His body was laid in the company of better men, by the side of Balmerino and Kilmarnock in the Church of St. Peter on the Green.

The genius of William Hogarth is inseparably associated with the Forty-five by reason of this famous portrait of Simon Lovat, and for yet another reason. In this year 1745 William Hogarth was already exceedingly popular, although he had as yet failed to bask much in the sunshine of royal favour. Those old, early days of poverty and struggle were far behind. The industrious apprentice had married his master's daughter, fifteen years ago by this time, and Sir James Thornhill had forgotten his wrath and forgiven the young painter who was so immeasurably his superior. "The Harlot's Progress," "The Rake's Progress," "Industry and Idleness," and many another plate in the astonishing panorama of mid last century life, had earned for Hogarth a high position in the favour of the day; and when he posted down to St. Albans, where wicked Simon Lovat lay sick, to receive the old traitor's lathered embrace and to make the famous engraving, William Hogarth was a very distinguished person indeed. The portrait of Simon Fraser had a great success. Never did portrait bear more distinctly the impress of fidelity. The unwieldy trunk, the swollen legs, the horrible, cunning, satyr-like face with its queerly-listed eyebrows, its flattened sensual nose, and its enormous mouth, the odd dogmatic gesture with which the index finger of the left hand touches the thumb of the right: all these things William Hogarth immortalised, making Simon Fraser Lord Lovat well-nigh as familiar a personality to us as he was to any of the men he betrayed or the women he wronged in the course of his base life. The plate had a prodigious success. The presses were hard at work for many days, and could not print proofs fast enough. "For several weeks," says Mr. Sala, "Hogarth received money at the rate of twelve pounds a day for prints of his etching." It was reduced in size and printed as a watch-paper—watch-papers were vastly fashionable in those days—and in that liliputian form it sold also in large quantities. The infamy

of the subject and the genius of the artist lent a double attraction to the portrait.

But the portrait of Simon Fraser is not the only, is not perhaps even the chief, connection of Hogarth with the Forty-five. Whether Hogarth did or did not do the sketch for the mezzotint engraving called "Lovat's Ghost on Pilgrimage" matters little. He certainly did do the famous picture and famous plate which is known as the "March to Finchley." Every one knows that marvellous and no doubt vividly accurate picture of the progress of the foot guards to Finchley Common on their way to Scotland; the riot, the debauchery, the confusion, the drunkenness of the scene. Those tipsy heroes, staggering along to the tunes of tipsy drummer and tiny fifer, while Doll Tearsheet and Moll Flanders harass them with enforced embraces, played their part no doubt in the horrible cruelties which succeeded Culloden. But, at the same time, these were among the soldiers who did succeed in preventing England from being given over to the Jacobites, or who at least prevented the Stuart Prince from holding Scotland, and setting up the Stuart throne there. It may, therefore, be perhaps pardoned to his Majesty King George the Second if he did not quite appreciate the "burlesque," even though that lack of appreciation made Hogarth in a rage dedicate the plate to his Majesty of Prussia.

Misfortune followed most of the followers of Prince Charles. Tullibardine died in the Tower a few days before his trial. Charles Ratcliffe, Lord Derwentwater's brother, was executed. Sheridan died of apoplexy in the November of 1746. The Duke of Perth died on shipboard, on his way to France, soon after Culloden. The less conspicuous rebels suffered as severely as the leaders. The executions that took place at York and Carlisle, at Penrith and Brampton, and on Kennington Common, bloodily avenged the blow that had been struck at the House of Hanover. A great number of prisoners who were not executed were shipped off as slaves to the plantations, a fate scarcely less terrible than death; some were pardoned on consideration of their entering the service of the King as sailors; some were pardoned later on; a few, it is said, escaped. The



sternest measures were taken to prevent any possibility of a further rising in Scotland. The disarmament of the clans, which had been carried out so imperfectly after the Fifteen, was now rigorously and effectually enforced. The hereditary jurisdiction of the chiefs of clans, which made those chiefs the petty kings of their districts, was abolished, and in their places the ordinary process of law was established, with its sheriffs and sheriffs' substitutes, and its circuits of judges. The national costume, the kilt, was proscribed under the severest penalties, though in the course of time this proscription was gradually relaxed. Every master of every private school north of the Tweed was called upon to swear allegiance to the House of Hanover, and to register his oath. The turbulent spirit and fine fighting qualities of the clans were turned to good account by the Government, who raised several Highland regiments, and thus succeeded in diverting to their own service all the restless and warlike energy which had hitherto been so troublesome to law and order. It must be admitted that the modern prosperity of Scotland dates in a great degree from the Forty-five. The old conditions of life in the Highlands were conditions under which it was impossible for a country to thrive; and though it is necessary to condemn the manner in which the Government, at all events in the earlier stages, attempted to effect the pacification of Scotland, it is also necessary to admit that Scotland is probably more fortunate to-day than she would have been if victory had been given to the Stuart at Culloden.

Of that Stuart we may as well take leave now. His subsequent career is a most dispiriting study. He hoped against hope for a while that this foreign power or that foreign power would lend him a helping hand to his throne. Expelled from France he drifted to Italy, and into that pitiable career of dissipation and drunkenness which ended so ingloriously a once bright career. To the unlucky women whom he loved he was astonishingly brutal; he forced Miss Walkenshaw—the lady of whom he became enamoured in Scotland—to leave him by his cruelty; he forced his unhappy wife, the Countess of

Albany, to leave him for the same reason. Her love affair with the poet Alfieri is one of the famous love-stories of the world. It seems pretty certain that Charles Stuart actually visited England once, if not more than once, after the Forty-five, and that George the Third was well aware of his presence in London, and, with a contemptuous good nature, took no steps whatever to lay hands upon the rival who was dangerous no longer. At last, on January 31, 1788, or, as some have it, on January 30, the actual anniversary of the execution of Charles the First, Charles Stuart died in Rome, and with him died the last hope of the Stuart restoration in England. Had Charles lived a little longer, he would have seen in the very following year the beginning of that great storm which was to sweep out of existence a monarchical system as absolute as that of the Stuarts had been, and to behead a monarch far less blamable than Charles the First of England. There is something appropriate in this uncompromising devotee and victim of the principle of divine right dying in exile on the very eve of that revolution which was practically to abolish the principle of the divine right of kings for ever. Oddly enough, there are still devotees of the House of Stuart, gentlemen and ladies who work up picturesque enthusiasms about the Rebel Rose and the Red Carnation, and who affect to regard a certain foreign princess as the real Sovereign of England. But the English people at large need hardly take this graceful Jacobitism very seriously. Jacobitism came to its end with Cardinal Henry dying as the pensioner of George the Third, and with Prince Charles drowning in Cyprus wine the once gallant spirit which, even at the end, could sometimes shake off its degradation, and blaze into a moment's despairing brilliancy, at the thought of the clans and the claymores, and the brave days of Forty-five. And so, in the words of the old Saga men, here he drops out of the tale.

But it is the curious characteristic of the ill-fated House of Stuart that, through all their misfortunes, through all their degradations, they have contrived to captivate the imagination and bewitch the hearts of many generations. The Stuart influence upon literature has been astonishing.

No cause in the world has rallied to its side so many poets, named or nameless, has so profoundly attracted the writers and the readers of romance, has bitten more deeply into popular fancy. Even in our own day, an English poet, Mr. Swinburne, who has not tuned much to thrones fallen or standing, has been inspired by the old Stuart frenzy to write one of the most valuable of all the wealth of ballads that have grown up around the Stuart name. In his "A Jacobite's Exile, 1746," Mr. Swinburne has summed up in lines of the most poignant and passionate pathos all the feeling of a gentleman of the North Country dwelling in exile for his King's sake. The emotion which finds such living voice in the contemporary poetry, in the ballads that men wrote and men sang, while the House of Stuart was still a reality, while there were still picturesque or semi-picturesque personages living in foreign courts and claiming the crown of England, finds no less living voice in the words written by a poet of to-day, though nearly a century has elapsed since the hopes of the House of Stuart went out for ever.

We'll see nae mair the sea banks fair,  
And the sweet, grey, gleaming sky,  
And the lordly strand of Northumberland,  
And the goodly towers thereby :  
And none shall know, but the winds that blow,  
The graves wherein we lie.

What was there, what is there, we may well ask, in that same House of Stuart, in that same Jacobite cause, which still quickens in this latter day a living passion and pathos, which can still inspire a poet of to-day with some of the finest verses he has ever written? It may be some consolation to the lingering adherents of the name, to those who wear oak-apple on May 29, and who sigh because there is no "king over the water" who can come to "enjoy his own again," it may be some consolation to them to think that if their cause can no longer stir the swords in men's hands, it can still guide their pens to as poetic purpose as it did in the years that followed the fatal Forty-five. It may console them too, perhaps, with a more ironical consolation, to know that the greatest enthusiast



about all things connected with the House of Stuart, the most eager collector of all Stuart relics, is the very Sovereign who is the direct descendant of the Hanoverian Electors against whom the clans were hurled at Sheriffmuir and at Culloden, the lady and Queen whom it affords a harmless gratification to certain eccentric contemporary Jacobites to allude to as "the Princess Albert of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha."

In the wild October of the wild year of the Forty-five a great spirit passed away under the most tragic conditions. While Scotland and England were raging for and against rebellion, the greatest mind of the age went grimly out in Ireland. On October 19, 1745, Jonathan Swift died. For years he had been but in a living death. Racked with pain, almost wholly bereft of reason, sometimes raging in fits of madness, he was a fearful sight to those who watched over him. When the end came it came quietly. He sank into sleep, and did not wake any more. He was in his seventy-eighth year when he died. A dim stone upon the darkened wall of St. Patrick's Church in Dublin sums up in words at once cruelly bitter and profoundly melancholy the story of his life. That mouldering inscription, niched in high obscurity, which sometimes stray pilgrims from across the seas strain their sight to decipher in the gloom, is the self-uttered epitaph of Jonathan Swift. We may translate it thus into English: "Here resteth the body of Jonathan Swift, Dean of this Cathedral Church, where fierce indignation can lacerate his heart no longer. Go, traveller, imitate if thou canst a champion, strenuous to his uttermost, of liberty."

A little way apart, shadowed by his name in death no less than in life, lies Stella, the pale, dark-haired child whose wide eyes filled with love as they followed the poor and lonely scholar through stately Shene or the prim rococo epicureanism of Moor Park. She sleeps, as she lived, at her master's feet. She dedicated all the days of her life to Swift with a devotion which is well-nigh without a parallel in the history of woman's love for man. Those who stand, awe-struck and reverential in the quiet presence of the dead, may well feel troubled by a haunting influence in

the twilight air of the place. It is the haunting influence of the secret of those two tortured lives, the secret that lies buried between their graves. One forgets for the moment Swift the fierce fighting statesman, and thinks only of the lonely man who lived to lament for Stella.

There has hardly ever been in the world, or out of it, in the illimitable kingdoms of fancy, a more famous pair of lovers than these two. Leila and Majnun, Romeo and Juliet, Petrarch and Laura—repeat what names we may of famous lovers that the fancies of poets have ever adored by the Tigris, or the Avon, or in the shadows of Vacluse, the names of Swift and Stella are found to appeal no less keenly to heart and brain, to the imagination and to pity. Happy they were not, and could not be. When we read of Swift and Stella the mind naturally turns to that luckless pair of lovers whom Dante saw in the third circle of hell, blown about for ever on the racking wind, and finding comfort through the lapse of eternal twilight in the companionship of their common doom. They, too—Swift and Stella—seem driven by the pitiless wind of fate; they have fallen upon evil days; they are greatly gifted, noble, greatly unhappy; they are sustained by their strange, exquisite friendship, by the community of genius, by a tender affection which was out of tune with the time and with their troubled lives. So long as Stella lived Swift was never alone. When she died he was alone till the end. There is nothing in literature more profoundly melancholy than Swift's own eloquent tribute to the memory of his dead wife, written in a room to which he has removed so that he may not see the light burning in the church windows, where her last rites are being prepared.

There is no greater and no sadder life in all the history of the last century. The man himself was described in the very hours when he was most famous, most courted, most flattered, as the most unhappy man on earth. Indeed he seems to have been most wretched; he certainly darkened the lives of the two or three women who were so unfortunate as to love him. But we may forget the sadness of the personal life in the greatness of the public career. Swift was the ardent champion of every cause that touched

him; the good friend of Ireland: he was always torn with "fierce indignation" against oppression and injustice. Thackeray, whose reading of the character of Swift is far too generally accepted, finds fault with the phrase, and blames somewhat bitterly the man who uses it, "as if," he says, "the wretch who lay under that stone waiting God's judgment had a right to be angry." But it was natural that Swift, scanning life from his own point of view, should feel a fierce indignation against wrong-doing, injustice, dishonesty. He was an erring man, but he had the right to be angry with crimes of which he could never be guilty. His ways were not always our ways, nor his thoughts our thoughts; but he walked his way such as it was courageously, and the temper of his thoughts was not unheroic. He was loyal to his leaders in adversity; he was true to friends who were sometimes untrue to him; his voice was always raised against oppression; he had the courage to speak up for Ireland and her liberties in some of the darkest days in our common history. To Thackeray he is only a "lonely guilty wretch," a bravo, and a bully, a man of genius employing that genius for selfish or vindictive purpose. To soberer and more sympathetic judgment, Thackeray's study of Swift is a cruel caricature. He may have been "miserrimus," but Grattan was right when he appealed long after to the "spirit of Swift" as the spirit of one in true sympathy with the expanding freedom of every people—a champion, strenuous to his uttermost, of liberty.

## CHAPTER XXXVII

### CHESTERFIELD IN DUBLIN CASTLE

THE Jacobite rebellion had compelled the Government to withdraw some of their troops from the Continent. France for a while was flattered and fluttered by a series of brisk successes which left almost the whole of the Austrian Netherlands in her possession at the end of the campaign



of 1746. The battle of Lauffeld, near Maestricht, in Holland, in the summer of 1747, in which the allied Austrian, Dutch, and English armies were defeated, especially exhilarated the French Jacobites. The French were commanded by Marshal Saxe, the victor of Fontenoy. The English troops were under the command of Cumberland, and Lauffeld was therefore regarded by them as in some sort avenging Culloden. The victory was largely due at Lauffeld, as it had been at Fontenoy, to the desperate courage of the Irish Brigade, who in the words of one of their enemies, "fought like devils" and actually came very near to capturing Cumberland himself. But the tide of victory soon turned for France on land and sea, and she became as anxious to make a peace as any other of the belligerent powers could be. The French were sick of the war. Henry Pelham was writing to the Duke of Cumberland to tell him that no more troops were to be had by England, and that, if they were to be had, there was no more money wherewith to pay them.

Political life in England had during all this time been passing through a very peculiar period of transition. When we speak of political life we are speaking merely of the life that went on in St. James's Palace, in the House of Lords, and in the House of Commons. The great bulk of the middle classes and the whole of the poorer classes all over Great Britain may be practically counted out when we are making any estimate of the movement and forces in the political life of that time. The tendency, however, was even then towards a development of the popular principle. The House of Lords had ceased to rule; the Commons had not yet begun actually to govern. But the Commons had become by far the more important assembly of the two; and if the House of Commons did not govern yet, it was certain that the King and the Ministry could only govern in the end through the House of Commons. The sudden shuffle of the cards of fate which had withdrawn both Walpole and Pulteney at one and the same moment from their place of command at either side of the field brought with it all the confusion of a parliamentary transformation scene. Nothing could have been more strictly

in the nature of the burlesque effects of a Christmas pantomime than Walpole and Pulteney shot up into the House of Lords, and Wilmington and Sandys set to carry on the government of the country.

Yet a little, and poor, harmless, useless Wilmington was dead. He died in July 1743. Then came the troubling question, who is to be Prime Minister? The Ministerialists were broken into utter schism. The Pelhams, who had for some time been secretly backed up by Walpole's influence with the King, were struggling hard for power against Carteret, and against such strength as Pulteney, Earl of Bath, still possessed. Carteret had made himself impossible by the way in which he had conducted himself in the administration of foreign affairs. He had gone recklessly in for a thoroughly Hanoverian policy. He had made English interests entirely subservient to the interests of Hanover; or rather, indeed, to the King's personal ideas as to the interests of Hanover. Carteret had the weakness of many highly-cultured and highly-gifted men; he believed far too much in the supremacy of intellect and culture. The great rising wave of popular opinion was unnoticed by him. He did not see that the transfer of power from the hereditary to the representative assembly must inevitably come to mean the transfer of power from the representatives to the represented. Carteret in his heart despised the people and all popular movements. Fancy being dictated to by persons who did not know Greek, who did not know German, who did not even know Latin and French! He was fully convinced for a while that with his gifts he could govern the people through the House of Commons and the House of Commons through the King. He was not really a man of much personal ambition, unless of such personal ambition as consists in the desire to make the most brilliant use of one's intellectual gifts. The effort to govern the House of Commons through the King interested him, and called all his dearest faculties into play. He scorned the ordinary crafts of party management. If he thought a man stupid he let the man know it. He was rude and overbearing to his colleagues; insulting to people, however well recom-

mended, who came to him to solicit office or pension. All that sort of thing he despised, and he bluntly said as much. "Ego et rex meus" was his motto, as we may say it was the motto of Wolsey. Not Wolsey himself made a more complete failure. The King fought hard for Carteret; but the stars in their courses were fighting harder against him.

Carteret's term of office was familiarly known as "the drunken Administration." The nickname was doubtless due in part to Carteret's love of wine, which made him remarkable even in that day of wine-drinking statesmen. But the phrase had reference also to the intoxication of intellectual recklessness with which Carteret rushed at and rushed through his work. It was the intoxication of too confident and too self-conscious genius. Carteret was drunk with high spirits, and with the conviction that he could manage foreign affairs as nobody else could manage them. No doubt he knew far more about continental affairs than any of his English contemporaries; but he made the fatal mistake which other brilliant Foreign Secretaries have made in their foreign policy: he took too little account of the English people and of prosaic public opinion at home. In happy intoxication of this kind he reeled and revelled along his political career like a man delighting in a wild ride after an exciting midnight orgy. He did not note the coming of the cold grey dawn, and of the day when his goings-on would become the wonder of respectable and commonplace observers.

The cold grey dawn came, however; and the day. The public opinion of the country could not be kept from observing and pronouncing on the doings of Carteret. Carteret felt sure that he was safe in the favour and the support of the King. He did not remember that the return of every cold grey dawn was telling more and more against him. The King, who, with all his vagaries and brutalities, had a considerable fund of common sense, was beginning to see that, much as he liked Carteret personally, the time was fast approaching when Carteret would have to be thrown overboard. The day when the King could rule without the House of Commons was gone. The day when



the House of Commons could rule without the Sovereign had not come.

In truth, the Patriots were now put at a sad disadvantage. It is a great triumph to overthrow a great Ministry, but the triumph often carries with it a responsibility which is too much for the victors to bear, and which turns them into the vanquished before long. So it fared with the Patriots. While they were in Opposition they had promised, as Sallust says Catiline and his friends did, seas and mountains. Now the time had come to show what they really could do; and, behold, they could do nothing. An Opposition has a safe time of it which, being directly adverse on some distinct question, principle, or policy to the party in power, is able to say, "Let us come into office and we will do the very opposite; we will try to undo all that the present Ministers have been doing," and is able to carry out the pledge. But the Opposition to Walpole had lived and flourished by finding fault with everything he did merely because it was he who did it, and with his way of doing everything merely because it was his way. Nothing can be easier than for a group of clever and unscrupulous men to make it hot for even the strongest Minister if they will only adopt such a plan of action. This was the plan of action of the Patriots, and they carried it out boldly, thoroughly, brilliantly, and successfully. But now that they had come into office they found that they had not come into power. The claim to power had still to be earned for them by the success of their administration; and what was there for them to do? Nothing—positively nothing, but just what their defeated opponents had been trying to do. Hanoverian policy, Hanoverian subsidies, foreign soldiers, standing armies—these were the crimes for which Walpole's Administration had been unsparingly assailed. But now came Carteret, and Carteret was on the whole rather more Hanoverian than the King himself. Pulteney? Why, such influence as Pulteney still had left was given to support Newcastle and Pelham, Walpole's own pupils and followers, in carrying out Carteret's Hanoverian policy.

Carteret set up Lord Bath as leader of the Administration. The two Pelhams, the Duke of Newcastle and his

brother, Henry Pelham, were tremendously strong in family influence, in money, in retainers, led-captains, and hangers-on of all kinds. Pulteney, who had always held a seat nominally in the Cabinet, although he had hitherto clung to his determination not to take office, now suddenly thought fit to change his mind. Probably he already regretted deeply the fatal mistake which had made him refuse to accept any office on the fall of Walpole. Perhaps he had fancied that the country and the Government never could get on without him, and that he would have been literally forced to withdraw his petulant self-denying ordinance. But the mistake was fatal, irreparable. The country did not insist on having him back at any price; the country did not seem to have been thinking about him at all. Now, when there seemed to be something like a new opportunity opening for him on the death of Lord Wilmington, he had the weakness to consent to be put up as a candidate for the position of Prime Minister. The effort proved a failure. The Pelhams were not only powerful in themselves, but they were powerful also in the support of Walpole. Walpole still had great influence over the King, and he naturally threw all that influence into the scale of the men who represented his own policy, and not into the scale of those who represented the policy of his enemies. Walpole and the Pelhams carried the day; Henry Pelham became Prime Minister, and from that time the power of Carteret was gone. This was in 1743—we are now going back a little to take up threads which had to be dropped in order to deal with the events springing out of the continental war, and especially the rebellion in Scotland—and in November 1744 Carteret was driven to resign his office. He had just become Earl Granville by the death of his mother, and was exiled to the House of Lords.

The King, however, still kept up his desire to get back Lord Granville and to get rid of the Pelhams. George had sense enough to despise the two brothers, and sense enough also to see when he could not do without them. During the February of 1746, while the Stuart rebellion was still aflame, a ministerial crisis came on. The Pelhams wished to bring Pitt into the Ministry; the King blankly refused.

But the King did more than that : he began to negotiate privately with Lord Granville and Lord Bath. The Pelhams knew their strength. They at once threw up their offices ; the whole Ministry resigned in a body. The King found that Carteret could not possibly form an Administration which would have any support worth a moment's consideration in either House of Parliament. The fortunes of Charles Stuart were still looking bright in the north, and the King found himself without a Ministry. There was no course open to him but one, and that was to recognise the strength of the Pelhams and their followers, and to take back Newcastle and his brother on any terms the conquerors might be pleased to dictate. The Pelhams came back to what might almost be called absolute power. The King was not likely soon again to trouble them with any hostile intervention. Thus these two men, one stupid beyond sounding, the other of only fair abilities, rising a little above mediocrity, had gone into battle with some of the greatest statesmen and orators of the age, and had come out victorious.

Henry Pelham's Administration was known by the slang nickname of the "Broad-bottomed Ministry." It is known by that nickname in history still ; will doubtless always keep the title. The great overmastering passion of the Pelhams was the desire to keep office and power in their hands at any price. Of the two brothers Henry Pelham was by far the abler man. His idea was to get around him all the really capable administrators and debaters of every party, and thus make up a Ministry which should be all-powerful and of which all the power should be in his hands. Like his brother the Duke of Newcastle, he had a sort of half-good-natured cynicism which never allowed him to doubt that if the offices were offered to the men the men would on any conditions accept the offices. The events that he had lately seen had not induced him in any way to modify his opinion. He had heard Pitt thundering away against Carteret in exactly the same strain as Pitt and Carteret used to thunder against Walpole. He had heard Pitt denounce Carteret as "an execrable, a sole Minister, who had ruined the British nation, and seemed to have drunk



of the potion described in poetic fiction, which made men forget their country." He had seen the policy of Walpole quietly carried out by the very men who had bellowed against Walpole and had succeeded at last in driving him from office for ever. He knew that no one now among those who used to call themselves "the Patriots" cared one straw whether Spain did or did not withdraw her claim to the right of search. His idea, therefore, was to get all the capable men of the various parties together, form them into an Administration, and leave them to enjoy their dignity and their emoluments while the King and he governed the country. It was in this spirit and with this purpose that he set himself to form the "Broad-bottomed Ministry." He was not, like his royal master, tormented or even embarrassed by personal dislikes ; he would take into his Ministry any one who could be of the slightest use to him. He would have kept Lord Carteret if Carteret had not made himself impossible.

The time had already come when Chesterfield had to be taken into the Administration again. He had made himself so particularly disagreeable to the King when out of office ; he had raked the Government, and even the Court, so hotly with satire and invective in the House of Lords, that George reluctantly admitted that it was better to try to live with such a man, seeing that it began to be impossible to live without him. So it was settled that some place should be found for Chesterfield, and at the same time it was very desirable that a place should be found which would not bring him much into personal association with the King. The condition of continental Europe, the fluctuations of the war, suggested a natural opportunity for making use of Chesterfield's admitted genius for diplomacy, and accordingly he was sent back to his old quarters at the Hague. He rendered some good service there ; and then suddenly the office of Viceroy of Ireland became vacant, and Chesterfield was called from the Hague and sent to Dublin Castle in 1745. He had known nothing of Ireland ; he had never before been put in any position where his gift of governing could be tried. The gift of governing is of course something entirely different from the gift of

managing diplomatic business ; and Chesterfield had as yet had no chance of proving any capacity but that of a parliamentary orator and a diplomatist. "Administration," according to Aristotle, "shows the man." Every one remembers the superb and only too often quoted Latin sentence which tells of one who by the consent of all would have been declared capable of ruling if only he had not ruled. Administration was to show the real Chesterfield. He was just the sort of person to whom one would have expected the Latin saying to apply. What a likely man, everybody might have said, to make a great administrator, if only he had not administered ! Chesterfield's record, however, must be read the other way. If he had never had the chance of administering the affairs of Ireland, how should we ever have known that he had a genius for governing men ?

For, in the minds of all who understand these times and those, Chesterfield's short season of rule in Ireland was by far the greatest period of his career. The Chesterfield of Dublin Castle was as high above the Chesterfield of the House of Lords as Goldsmith the poet is above Goldsmith the historian, or Blackstone the constitutional lawyer is above Blackstone the poet. Judging of Chesterfield's conduct in the Irish Viceroyalty by Chesterfield's past career, men would have been entitled to assume that his sympathies would go altogether with the governing race in Ireland. With them were the wealth, the rank, the fashion, the elegance, the refinement. With them was the easy-going profession of State religion—just the sort of thing that suited Chesterfield's ways. What sympathy could such a man as he have with the Celtic and Catholic Irishman ? Why should he care to be popular with such a population ? Even such gifted, and, on the whole, patriotic Protestants as Swift only sympathised with the Catholic Celts as an Englishman living in Virginia in the old plantation days might have sympathised with the population of negro slaves. Chesterfield might have entered on his formal task in the temper of graceful levity and high-bred languid indifference. He might have allowed the cultured and respectable gentlemen who were his permanent officials to manage

things as they had long been doing before his time, pretty much in their own way. He might have given them politely to understand that so long as they spared him any trouble in his unthankful task he would back them up in anything they did. He might have made it plain to the Protestant gentry and the Castle folk that his sympathies were all with them ; that he desired only to mix with them ; and that it really did not much matter what the outer population in Ireland thought of him or of them. Thus he would easily have become the darling of Dublin Castle ; and to most Irish Viceroys the voice of Dublin Castle was the voice of Ireland ; at all events the only voice in Ireland to which they cared to listen.

What did Chesterfield find in Ireland when he came to undertake the task of government in Dublin Castle ? He found a people oppressed almost beyond endurance by a cruel and barbarous system of penal laws directed against the profession and the practice of the faith to which they were passionately devoted. No people in the world's history, not even the Scottish Covenanters, were more absolutely absorbed by the zeal of their faith than the Irish Catholic Celts. The Penal Laws were devised and were being worked with the avowed intention of extirpating either the faith or the race, or, better still, the faith and the race. "The Irish," said Dr. Johnson, "bursting forth," as his biographer tells us, "with a generous indignation," "are in a most unnatural state, for we see there the minority prevailing over the majority. There is no instance, even in the ten persecutions, of such severity as that which the Protestants of Ireland have exercised against the Catholics." The Revolution, which had brought liberty of worship to England, had only brought harsher and more cruel repressive legislation against liberty of worship in Ireland. Where Chesterfield got the ideas which he carried out from the first in his government of Ireland it is hard to understand. He must have had that gift of spontaneous sympathy which is the very instinct of genius in the government of a people among whom one has not been born, among whom one has scarcely lived. His mind seems to have taken in at a glance the whole state of things. Talleyrand said of



Alexander Hamilton, the great American statesman, that he had "divined Europe." Chesterfield had apparently divined Ireland.

The twin curses of Ireland at the time were the Penal Laws and the corrupt administration of Dublin Castle. Chesterfield determined to strike a heavy blow at each of these evil things. He saw that the baneful class ascendancy which was engendered by the Penal Laws was as bad in the end for the oppressors as for the oppressed. He saw that it was poisoning those who were administering it as well as those against whom it was administered. He could not abolish the Penal Laws or get them repealed. No man in his senses could have hoped to get the existing Parliament either of England or of Ireland to do anything then with the Penal Laws, except perhaps to try to make them a little more severe and more tormenting. Chesterfield did not waste a thought on any such device. He simply resolved that he would not put the Penal Laws into action. It has been said of Chesterfield's administration in Ireland that it was a policy which, with certain reservations, Burke himself might have originated and owned. Chesterfield took the government entirely into his own hands. He did his very best to suppress the jobbery which had become a tradition in the officialism of Dublin Castle. He established schools wherever he could. He tried to encourage and foster new branches of manufacture, and to give a free way to trade, and a stimulus to all industrial arts and crafts. He showed himself a strong man determined to repress crime and outrage, but he showed himself also a just and a merciful man determined not to create new crimes in the hope of repressing the old offences. The curse of Irish repressive government has always been its tendency to make fresh crimes, crimes unknown to the ordinary law. Chesterfield would have nothing of the kind. More than that, he would not recognise as offences the State-made crimes which so many of his predecessors had shown themselves ruthless in trying to repress. The confidence of the people began to revive under his rule. The Irish Catholic began to find that, although the Penal Laws still existed in all their blood-

thirsty and stupid clauses, he might profess and practise his religion without the slightest fear of the informer, the prison, the transport ship, or the hangman. Chesterfield asked for no additional troops from England. On the contrary, he sent away some of the soldiers in Ireland to help the cause of the empire on the Continent. He was buoyant with a well-grounded confidence; and there was something contagious in his fearless generosity and justice. The Irish people soon came to understand him, and almost to adore him. He was denounced of course by the alarmists and the cowards; by the Castle hacks and the furious anti-Catholic bigots. Chesterfield let them denounce as long and as loudly as seemed good to them. He never troubled himself about their wild alarms and their savage clamour.

Probably no Irishman who ever lived was a more bitter and uncompromising enemy of English rule in Ireland than John Mitchel, the rebel of 1848. His opinion, therefore, is worth having as to the character of Chesterfield's rule in Dublin Castle. In his "History of Ireland," a book which might well be more often read in this country than it is, Mitchel says of Chesterfield, "Having satisfied himself that there was no insurrectionary movement in the country, and none likely to be, he was not to be moved from his tolerant courses by any complaints or remonstrances. Far from yielding to the feigned alarm of those who solicited him to raise new regiments, he sent four battalions of the soldiers then in Ireland to reinforce the Duke of Cumberland. He discouraged jobs, kept down expenses. . . . When some savage Ascendency Protestant would come to him with tales of alarm, he usually turned the conversation into a tone of light badinage, which perplexed and baffled the man. One came to seriously put his lordship on his guard by acquainting him with the fact that his own coachman was in the habit of going to mass. 'Is it possible?' cried Chesterfield—'Then I will take care the fellow shall not drive *me* there.' A courtier burst into his apartment one morning, while he was sipping his chocolate in bed, with the startling intelligence that the Papists were rising in Connaught. 'Ah,' he said, looking at

his watch—'tis nine o'clock—time for them to rise.' There was evidently no dealing with such a Viceroy as this, who showed such insensibility to the perils of Protestantism and the evil designs of the dangerous Papists. Indeed he was seen to distinguish by his peculiar admiration a Papist beauty, Miss Ambrose, whom he declared to be the only 'dangerous Papist' he had met in Ireland." Chesterfield himself has left an exposition of his policy which we may well believe to be genuine. "I came determined," he wrote many years after, "to proscribe no set of persons whatever, and determined to be governed by none. Had the Papists made any attempt to put themselves above the law, I should have taken good care to have quelled them again. It was said that my lenity to the Papists had wrought no alteration either in their religious or their political sentiments. I did not expect that it would; but surely that was no reason for cruelty towards them."

It is true that Lord Chesterfield's conduct in Ireland has been found fault with by no less devoted a friend of Ireland than Burke. In his letter to a peer of Ireland on the Penal Laws against the Irish Catholics, Burke says, "This man, while he was duping the credulity of Papists with fine words in private, and commending their good behaviour during a rebellion in Great Britain—as it well deserved to be commended and rewarded—was capable of urging penal laws against them in a speech from the throne, and of stimulating with provocatives the wearied and half-exhausted bigotry of the then Parliament of Ireland." But Burke was a man whose public virtue was too high and unbending to permit him to make allowance for the political arts and crafts of a Chesterfield. It is quite true that Chesterfield recommended in his speech that the Irish Parliament should enquire into the working of the Penal Laws in order to find out if they needed any improvement. But this was a mere piece of stage-play to amuse and to beguile the stupidity and the bigotry of the Irish Parliament of those days. It was not a stroke of policy which a man like Burke would have condescended to or could have approved; but it must have greatly delighted the cynical humour of such a man as Chesterfield. At all events



it is certain that during his administration Chesterfield succeeded in winning the confidence and the admiration of the Catholics of Ireland—that is to say, of five sixths of the population of the country. He was very soon recalled; perhaps the King did not quite like his growing popularity in Ireland; and when he left Dublin he was escorted to the ship's side by an enthusiastic concourse of people who pressed around him to the last and prayed of him to return soon to Ireland. Chesterfield did not return to Ireland. He was made one of the Secretaries of State, and the Dublin Castle Administration went on its old familiar way. But there is even still among the Irish people a lingering tradition of the rule of Lord Chesterfield, and of the new system which he tried for a while to establish in the government of their island.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII

### PRIMUS IN INDIS

BEFORE the Jacobite rising had been put down or the Pelhams absolutely set up, England, without knowing it, had sent forth a new conqueror, and might already have hailed the first promises of sway over one of the most magnificent empires of the earth. The name of the new conqueror was Robert Clive; the name of the magnificent empire was India.

At that time the influence of England over India was small to insignificance—a scrap of Bengal, the island and town of Bombay, Madras, and a fort or two. The average Englishman's knowledge of India was small even to non-existence. The few Englishmen who ever looked with eyes of intelligent information upon that great tract of territory, leaf-shaped, and labelled India on the maps, knew that the English possessions therein were few and paltry. Three quite distinct sections called presidencies, each independent of the two others, and all governed by a supreme authority whose offices were in Leadenhall Street in London,

represented the meagre nucleus of what was yet to be the vast Anglo-Indian Empire. The first of these three presidencies was the Bombay presidency, where the Indian Ocean washes the Malabar coast. The second was in the Carnatic, on the eastern side of the leaf, where the waters of the Bay of Bengal wash the Coromandel coast, where the forts of St. George and St. David protected Madras and a smaller settlement. The third presidency was up towards the north, where the sacred Ganges, rushing through its many mouths to the sea, floods the Hooghley. Here the town of Calcutta was growing up around Fort William.

These three little presidencies, plying their poor trade, and depending for defence upon their ill-disciplined native soldiers, the Sepahis, whom we have come to call Sepoys, were all that had grown out of the nearly two centuries of relations with the leaf-shaped Indian land since first, in 1591, Captain Lancaster sailed the seas; since first the East India Company sprang into existence. It was not an agreeable two centuries for Englishmen who ever thought of India to read about. Two centuries of squabbings and strugglings with Dutch settlers and with Portuguese settlers, of desperate truckling to native princes. In 1664 the English East India Company found a rival more formidable than the Dutch or the Portuguese in the French East India Company, which the astuteness of Colbert set up at Pondicherry, and which throve with a rapidity that quite eclipsed the poor progress of the English traders. Even when, in 1708, the old East Indian Company united its fortunes with the new Indian Company that had been formed, and thus converted one rival into an ally, the superiority of the French remained uncontested, and daily waxed greater and greater, until it began to seem as if, in the words of Antony to Cleopatra, all the East should call her mistress.

Such was the condition of affairs in the year 1743, when the apparently insignificant fact that a young gentleman of a ne'er-do-well disposition, who seemed likely to come to a bad end in England, and who was accordingly shipped off to India by his irritated relations, altered and

exalted the destinies not merely of a wealthy trading company but of the British Crown. In the market town of Drayton-in-Hales, better known as Market Drayton, in Shropshire, there lived, in the reign of George the First, a Mr. Richard Clive—a man whose comparatively meagre abilities were divided between the profession of the law and the cares of a small and not very valuable estate. In the little town on the river Tern, within sight of the old church built by Stephen, whose architectural characteristics were then happily unaltered by the hand of the eighteenth-century restorer, the Clives had been born and given in marriage and died, and repeated the round ever since the twelfth century. Mr. Richard Clive, in the reign of George the First, married a Manchester lady named Gaskill, who bore him many children of no note whatever, but who bore him one very noteworthy child indeed, his eldest son Robert, on September 29, in the year 1725.

There was a time, a long time too, during which the worthy Mr. Richard Clive persisted in regarding the birth of this eldest son as little less than a curse. He could very well have said of Robert what the Queen-mother says of Richard of Gloster, tetchy and wayward was his infancy. Seldom was there born into the world a more stubborn-minded, high-spirited boy. He may remind us a little of the young Mirabeau in his strenuous impassioned youth; in the estimate which those nearest to him, and most ignorant of him, formed of the young lion cub in the domestic litter; in the strange promise which the great career fulfilled. There was a kind of madness in the impish pranks which the boy Clive played in Market Drayton, scaring the timid and scandalising the respectable. He climbed to the top of the lofty steeple of that church, which dated from the days of Stephen, and perched himself upon a stone spout near the dizzy summit with a cool courage which Stephen himself might have envied. He got round him from among the idle lads of the town “a list of lawless resolute,” and, like David, made himself a captain over them for the purpose of levying a kind of guerilla warfare upon the shopkeepers of the little town, and making them pay tribute for the sanctity of their



windows. In fact he behaved as wildly as the wildest schoolboy could behave; drifting from school to school, to learn nothing from each new master, and only to leave behind at each the record of an incorrigible reprobate. Nobody seems to have discovered that there was anything of the man of genius in the composition of the incorrigible reprobate, and so it came about that the town of Market Drayton in general, and the respectable family of the Clives in particular, breathed more freely when it was known that young Robert was "bound to John Company"—that he had accepted a writership in the East India Service, and had actually sailed for Madras.

The career to which the young Clive was thus devoted did not, on the face of it, appear to be especially brilliant. The voyage in itself, to begin with, was a terrible business; a six months' voyage was then regarded as an astonishingly quick passage, and in Clive's case the voyage was longer even than usual. It was more than a year after he left England before he arrived at Madras, as his ship had stayed for some months at the Brazils. Clive arrived at Madras with no money, with many debts, and with some facility in speaking Portuguese, acquired during the delay in the Brazils. He had absolutely no friends in India, and made no friends for many months after his arrival. It would be hard to think of a more desolate position for a proud, shy, high-spirited lad with a strong strain of melancholy in his composition. We find him sighing for Manchester with all the profound and pathetic longing which inspires the noble old English ballad of "Farewell Manchester." It is not easy for us of to-day, who associate the name of Manchester with one of the greatest manufacturing towns in the world, to appreciate to the full either the spirit of the old ballad or the longing aspiration which Clive had to see again Manchester, "the centre of all my wishes." But if he was homesick, if he was lonely, if he was poor in pocket and weak in health, shadowed by melancholy and saddened by exile, he never for a moment suffered his pride to abate or his courage to sink. He treated his masters of the East India Company with the same scornful spirit which he had of old shown to the

shopkeepers of Market Drayton and the schoolmasters of Shropshire.

In the wretched mood of mind and body that Clive owned during his early days at Madras the constitutional melancholy asserted itself with conquering force, and he twice attempted his life. On each occasion the pistol which he turned upon his desperate and disordered brain missed fire. Yet Clive had meant most thoroughly and consistently to kill himself. He did not, like Byron, discover after the attempt was made that the weapon he had aimed at his life was not loaded. Each time the pistol was properly charged and primed, and each time it was the accident of the old flint-lock merely causing a flash in the pan which saved his life. In a nature that is melancholy a tinge of superstition is appropriate, and it is hardly surprising if Clive saw in the successive chance a proof that he was not meant, as yet, to perish by self-slaughter. "I must be destined for great things," he thought, and he was right. Between that attempt at suicide and the next lay long years of unexampled glory, lay the pomp of Oriental courts and the glitter of Oriental warfare, lay the foundation and establishment of that empire of India which is to-day one of the greatest glories of the British Crown—an empire mightier, wealthier, statelier than any which Aurungzebe swayed, and whose might, and wealth, and state were mainly due to the courage and the genius of the lonely, melancholy lad, the humble writer in the service of John Company, who had endeavoured in his solitude and his despair to end his young life at the muzzle of his pistol.

What was the condition of India at the time when Clive was making unavailing efforts to cut short his career? The country itself was given over to the wildest confusion. With the death of Aurungzebe, in 1707, the majestic empire of the House of Baber came to an end. The empire of Alexander did not crumble more disastrously to pieces after the death of the Macedonian prince than did the empire of the Moguls fall to pieces after the death of Aurungzebe. The pitiable and despicable successors of a great prince, worse than Sardanapalus, worse than

the degraded Cæsars of the basest days of Byzantium, squandered their unprofitable hours in shameful pleasure while the great empire fell to pieces, trampled by the conquering feet of Persian princes, of Afghan invaders, of wild Mahratta chiefs. Between the fierce invaders from the northern hills who ravaged, and levied tribute, and established dominion of their own, and such still powerful viceroys as held their own and offered a nominal allegiance to the Mogul line, the glory of the race of Tamerlane was dimmed indeed. It occurred to one man, watching all the welter of the Indian world, where Mussulman and Hindoo struggled for supremacy—it occurred to Dupleix that in this struggle lay the opportunity for some European power—for his European power—for France—to gain for herself, and for the daring adventurer who should shape her Oriental policy, an influence hitherto undreamed of by the statesmen of the West. It was not given to Dupleix to guess that what he dreamed of and nearly accomplished was to be carried out at last by Robert Clive.

The history of French empire in India contains two specially illustrious names—the name of La Bourdonnais and the name of Dupleix. The first had practically called into existence the two colonies of the Ile de France and of Bourbon; the second had founded the town of Chandernagor, in the Bay of Bengal, and, as Governor-General of the French East India Company, had established himself at Pondicherry with all the luxury, and more than all the luxury, of a veritable Oriental prince. It may be that if these two men had been better able to agree together the fortunes of the French nation in the Indies might have been very different. But a blind and uncompromising jealousy divided them. Whatever Dupleix did was wrong in the eyes of La Bourdonnais; whatever La Bourdonnais did was wrong in the eyes of Dupleix; and Dupleix was the stronger man of the two, and he finally triumphed for a time. In the war that was raging La Bourdonnais saw his opportunity. He determined to anticipate Dupleix in beginning hostilities against the English in India. He set sail from the Island of Bourbon with a fleet of nine vessels which he had equipped at his proper cost, and an army of



some three thousand men, which included a large proportion of negroes. After a successful engagement with the ships of war under the command of Admiral Burnett, outside Madras, La Bourdonnais disembarked, besieged Madras, and compelled the town to capitulate. So far the star of La Bourdonnais was in the ascendant. But the terms which he exacted from the conquered town were, by their very moderation, the means of his undoing. With the keys of the conquered town in his hand, with the French colours floating bravely from Fort St. George, with all the stored wealth of the company as spoils of war, La Bourdonnais thought that he might be not unlenient in the terms he accorded to his enemies. He allowed the English inhabitants of Madras to remain prisoners of war on parole, and stipulated that the town should remain in his hands until the payment of a ransom of some nine millions of francs.

The triumph of La Bourdonnais aroused, however, not the admiration but the jealousy of Dupleix. Out of La Bourdonnais's very victory the cunning of Dupleix discovered a means to humiliate his rival. The vague schemes which he had formed for the authority of France and for his influence in India did not at all jump with the restoration of Madras once conquered to the English. He declared that La Bourdonnais had gone beyond his powers; that terms to the vanquished on Indian soil could be made by the Governor of Pondicherry and the Governor of Pondicherry alone. He refused to ratify La Bourdonnais's convention, and, instead, declared that the capitulation was at an end, marched upon Madras, insisted upon the pillage and destruction of a great portion of the town, arrested a large number of the leading Englishmen, including the Governor of Fort St. George, and conveyed them with all circumstances of public ignominy to Pondicherry. As for La Bourdonnais, who had taken so gallant a step to secure French supremacy in India, he was placed under arrest and sent to France, where the Bastille awaited him; he had fallen before his vindictive rival.

The inhabitants of Madras, smarting under what may

fairly be called the treachery of Dupleix, considered rightly that they were no longer bound by the convention with the luckless La Bourdonnais. One at least of the inhabitants was a man not likely to be bound by the mere letter of a convention which had already been broken in the spirit. Clive disguised himself as a Mussulman—we may be permitted to wonder how a man who to the end of his days remained eccentrically ignorant of all Eastern languages accomplished this successfully—and, escaping from Madras, made his way to Fort St. David. At Fort St. David his military career began. The desperate courage which had carried him to the top of the tower of Stephen's Church, and which had enabled him to overawe the "military bully who was the terror of Fort St. David," now found its best vent in "welcoming the French," like the hero of Burns's ballad, "at the sound of the drum." The peace which was concluded between England and France sent Clive for a season, however, back to the counting-house, and gave back Madras again to the English company.

But the ambition of Dupleix was not a thing to be bounded by the circumscription of war or peace between England and France. England and France might be at peace, but there was no need that the English East India Company and the French East India Company should be at peace as well. The internal troubles of India afforded Dupleix the opportunity he coveted of pushing his own fortunes and doing his best to drive the English traders out of the field. Unfortunately for him, however, his opportunity was also the opportunity of the young writer and ensign who had already won the admiration and the esteem of Major Lawrence, then looked upon as the first English officer in India.

While the French still held Madras, before the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle compelled the reluctant Dupleix to restore it to the English, a military episode, which might almost be called an accident, had helped to confirm enormously the influence of France in India. The Nabob of the Carnatic, offended by the action of the English governor of Madras, who had omitted to send him those presents

which are essential to all stages of Oriental diplomacy, had practically winked at the action of the more liberal-handed Dupleix in his movement against Madras. When, too late, the Nabob heard of the fall of Madras, he sent an army to recapture the town, and called upon the French governor to surrender it. The governor was Duval D'Espremesnil, the father of that mad D'Espremesnil who fuliginates through a portion of the French Revolution. He refused to obey the Nabob, opened fire upon his forces, and repulsed them. The repulse was followed a little later by a vigorous attack of the French troops under Paradis, which smashed the armament of the Nabob to pieces at St. Thome on November 4, 1746. This victory gave the French a prestige of which Dupleix was the very man to appreciate the full importance. When, in 1748, Nizam-Al-Mulk, the Viceroy of the Deccan, died, there arose at once pretenders not merely to the Deccan Viceroyalty, but also to the government of the Carnatic. The first was claimed by Mirzapha Jung; the second by Chunda Sahib. Mirzapha Jung and Chunda Sahib, profoundly impressed by the triumph of French arms two years earlier, appealed to Dupleix to help them, joined their forces, and invaded the Carnatic.

Dupleix was not unwilling to listen to the appeal of the invaders. He saw that the chance had arisen for him to constitute himself the Warwick, the king-maker, of India. He lent all the force of his European troops, of his native troops trained in the European fashion, and of the prestige of France to the invaders. The old Nabob of the Carnatic, Anaverdi Khan, was defeated and killed. His son fled with his broken army to Trichinopoly, and the invaders nominally, and Dupleix actually, reigned supreme in the Carnatic.

At that moment the sun of Dupleix's fortunes reached its zenith. He was the chosen companion and confidant of the new Nizam of the Deccan; he was made Governor of India from the river Kristna to Cape Comorin; he pumped it with more than Oriental splendour in the pageantries of triumph at Pondicherry; he set up on the scene of his victory a stately column bearing in four lan-



guages inscriptions celebrating his fame ; he had treasure, power, and influence even to his ambitious heart's content. When Mirzapha Jung died, shortly after his accession to the government of the Deccan, Dupleix held equal influence over his successor. He might well have believed that his glory was complete, his plans perfected ; he might well have believed that he could afford to smile at the feeble efforts which the English made to stay his progress.

He soon ceased to smile. Clive, then five-and-twenty years old, urged upon his superiors that Trichinopoly must soon fall before famine and leaguer, that with the overthrow of the House of Anaverdi Khan the power of the French over India would be established, and the power of the English in India destroyed. The great deed to be done was to raise the siege of Trichinopoly. This Clive coolly proposed to do by effecting a counter-diversion in besieging Arcot, the favoured home of the Nabobs. With a little handful of an army, 200 Europeans and 300 Sepoys, Clive marched through the wildest weather to Arcot, captured it, and prepared to hold his conquest. We may perhaps here be permitted to say that in using, as we shall continue to do, the old familiar forms of spelling the names of Indian towns and of Indian princes, we do so not in ignorance of the fact that in many, if not most cases, they present but a very poor idea indeed of the actual Oriental sounds and spelling. The modern writers on Indian history adopt a new and more scientific spelling, which makes Arcot Arkát, and Trichinopoly Trichinápalli. But, all things considered, it seems best for the present to adhere to those old forms which have become as it were part of English history.

Chunda Sahib, who was besieging Trichinopoly, immediately despatched 4000 men against Arcot, which, joining with the defeated garrison and a few French, made up a muster of some 10,000 men under Rajah Sahib, Chunda Sahib's son, against a garrison of little more than 300. The defence of Arcot is one of the most brilliant episodes in history. It reads rather like some of those desperate and heroic adventures in which the fiction of the elder Dumas delighted than the sober chronicle of

recorded warfare. For fifty days the siege raged. For fifty days Rajah Sahib did his best to take the town, and for fifty days Clive and his little band of Europeans and Sepoys frustrated all his efforts. The stubborn defence began to create allies. The fighting capacity of the English had come to be regarded with great contempt by the native races, but the contempt was now rapidly changing to admiration. Murari Rao, the great Mahratta leader, who had been hired to assist the cause of Mohammed Ali, but who had hitherto hung in idleness upon the Carnatic frontier, convinced that the English must be defeated, now declared that since he had learned that the "English could fight" he was willing to fight for them and with them, and prepared to move to the assistance of Clive. Before they could arrive, Rajah Sahib made a desperate last effort to capture Arcot, was completely defeated with great loss, and withdrew from Arcot, leaving Clive and his little army masters of the place.

Great was the glory of Clive in Fort St. George; but Clive was not going to content himself with so much and no more. With an army increased to nearly a thousand men he assailed the enemy, defeated Rajah Sahib once and again, and in his triumphal progress caused to be razed to the ground the memorial city which the pride of Dupleix had erected to his victory, and the vaunting monument which set forth in four languages the glory of his deeds. The astonished Nabobs began for the first time to understand that the glory of France was not invincible, that a new star had arisen before which the star of Dupleix must pale, and might vanish. The star of Clive continued to mount. Though the arrival of Major Lawrence from England took away from his hands the chief command, he worked under Lawrence as gallantly as when he was alone responsible for his desperate undertakings, and success, as before, followed all the enterprises in which he was concerned.

Trichinopoly was relieved; Chunda Sahib was captured by the Mahrattas and put to death; Covelong and Chingkeput, two of the most important French forts, were captured by Clive with an army as unpromising as Falstaff's ragged regiment. At this point, and on the full tide of

victory, Clive's health broke down, and he was compelled to return to England for change of climate. Before he left Madras he married Miss Maskelyne. Never did a man return to his native land under more auspicious conditions who had gone thence under conditions so inauspicious. The bad boy of Market Drayton was now the illustrious and opulent soldier whom the gentlemen of the India House delighted to salute as General Clive, and about whom it seemed as if it was impossible for the nation to make too much ado.

Clive was now seized with the ambition to play a part in home politics. The general election of 1754 seemed to offer him a tempting opportunity of entering Parliament. He came forward as one of the members for St. Michael's in Cornwall, was opposed by Newcastle, and supported by Sandwich and Fox, was returned, was petitioned against, and was unseated on petition. To fight a parliamentary election in those days meant the spending of a very great deal of money, and Clive, who had squandered his well-earned fortune right and left since his return to his native land, found himself after he was unseated in a decidedly disagreeable position. His money was dwindling; his hope of political triumphs had vanished into thin air; naturally enough his thoughts turned back to the India of his youth. The curious good luck that always attended upon him stood him in good stead here. If he had need of the India of his youth, the India of his youth had need of him. If France and England were not at war, the rumour of war was busy between them, and there was a desire for good leaders in the advancing English colonies in India. Poor Dupleix was out of the way already. The brilliant spirit whom Clive's genius had overcrowded had vanished for ever from the scenes of his triumphs and his humiliations. He had suffered something of the same hard measure that he had himself meted out to his colleague La Bourdonnais; he had been recalled in comparative disgrace to France, with ruined fortunes and ruined hopes, to die, a defeated and degraded man, the shadow of his own great name. But the influence of France was not extinct in India; it might at any moment reassert itself—



at any moment come to the push of arms between France and England in the East as well as in the West; and where could the English look for so capable a leader of men as Clive? So it came about that in the year 1755 Clive again sailed the seas for India, under very different conditions from those under which he first adventured for the East. Then, he was an unknown unappreciated rapscallion of a lad, needy, homesick, desperate, and alone; now, he was going out as the governor of Fort St. David, as lieutenant-colonel in the British army, with a record of fame and fortune behind him. New fame, new fortune awaited him almost on the very moment of his arrival in India. The pirate stronghold of Gheriah fell before him almost as easily as if the place had been a new Jericho and Clive a second Joshua. But there was greater work in store for him than the destruction of pirate strongholds. Bengal became suddenly the theatre of a terrible drama. Up to the year 1756 the tranquillity of the English settlers and traders in Bengal had been undisturbed. Their relations with the Nabob Ali Vardi Khan had been of the friendliest kind, and the very friendliness of those relations had had the effect of making the English residents in Bengal, like the native population, men of a milder mould than those whom hard fortune had fashioned into soldiers and statesmen at Madras. But in the year 1756 the Nabob Ali Vardi Khan died, and was succeeded by his grandson, Siraju'd Daulah, infamous in English history as Surajah Dowlah.

This creature, who incarnated in his own proper person all the worst vices of the East, without apparently possessing any of the East's redeeming virtues, cherished a very bitter hatred of the English. Surajah Dowlah was unblest with the faintest glimmerings of statesmanship; it seemed to his enfeebled mind that it would be not only a very good thing to drive the English out of Bengal, but that it would be also an exceedingly easy thing to do. All he wanted, it seemed to him, was a pretext, and to such a mind a pretext was readily forthcoming. Had not the English dogs fortified their settlement without his permission? Had they not afforded shelter to some victim

flying from his omnivorous rapacity? These were pretexts good enough to serve the insane brain of Surajah Dowlah. He attacked Fort William with an overwhelming force; the English traders, unwarlike, timorous, and deserted by their leaders, made little or no resistance; the madman had Fort William in his power, and used his power like a madman. The memory of the Black Hole of Calcutta still remains a mark of horror and of terror upon our annals of Indian empire. When Lord Macaulay, eighty-four years after the event, penned his famous passage in which he declared that nothing in history or in fiction, not even the story which Ugolino told in the sea of everlasting ice, approached the horrors of the Black Hole, he wrote before the worst horrors of Indian history had yet become portion and parcel of our own history. But even those who write to-day, more than a century and a quarter after that time; those in whose minds the memories are fresh of the butcher's well at Cawnpore and the massacre on the river bank; those to whom the names of Nana Sahib and Azimoolah Khan sound as horridly as the names of fiends—even those can still think of the Black Hole as almost incomparable in horror, and of Surajah Dowlah as among the worst of Oriental murderers. It is true that certain efforts have been made to reduce the measure of Surajah Dowlah's guilt. Colonel Malleeson, than whom there is no fairer or abler Indian historian, thinks there can be no doubt that Surajah Dowlah did not desire the death of his English prisoners. Mr. Holwell, one of the few survivors of that awful night, the man whose narrative thrilled and still thrills, horrified and still horrifies, the civilised world, does give testimony that goes towards clearing the character of Surajah Dowlah from direct complicity in that terrible crime. "I had in all three interviews with him," he wrote, "the last in Darbar before seven, when he repeated his assurances to me, on the word of a soldier, that no harm should come to us; and, indeed, I believe his orders were only general that we for that night should be secured, and that what followed was the result of revenge and resentment in the breasts of the lower jemadars to whose custody we were delivered for the number of their

order killed during the siege." Yet these words do not go far to cleanse Surajah Dowlah's memory. What had occurred? The English prisoners were brought before the triumphant Nabob, bullied and insulted, and finally left in charge of the Nabob's soldiery, while the Nabob himself retired to slumber. The soldiery, whether prompted by revenge or mere merciless cruelty, forced the prisoners, one hundred and forty-six in number, into the garrison prison, a fearful place, only twenty feet square, known as the Black Hole. The senses sicken in reading what happened after this determination was carried out. The death-struggles of those unhappy English people crowded in that narrow space, without air, in the fearful summer heat, stir the profoundest pity, the profoundest anguish. The Nabob's soldiers all through that fearful night revelled in the sights and sounds that their victims' sufferings offered to them.

When the night did end and the awakened despot did allow the door of the Black Hole to be opened, only twenty-three out of the hundred and forty-six victims were alive. The hundred and twenty-three dead bodies were hurriedly buried in a common pit.

It is simply impossible to exonerate Surajah Dowlah from the shame and stain of that deed. The savage who passed "the word of a soldier" that the lives of his prisoners should be spared took no precautions to insure the carrying out of his promise. If, as Mr. Holwell says, the lower jemadars were thirsting for revenge, then the Nabob who gave his prisoners over to the care of those jemadars was directly responsible for their deeds. Even in Surajah Dowlah's army there must have been men, there must have been officers, to whom the tyrant, if he had wished his prisoners to be well treated, could have entrusted them, in the full confidence and certainty that his commands would be carried out, and his humane wishes humanely interpreted. But even if by the utmost straining we can in any degree acquit the Nabob of direct personal responsibility before the act, his subsequent conduct involves him in direct complicity, and forces upon him all the responsibility and all the infamy. He did not punish



the miscreants who forced their victims into the Black Hole and who gloated over their appalling sufferings. He did not treat the survivors with ordinary humanity. He was evidently convinced that he could deal with the wretched English as he pleased, that their power in India was annihilated, that Surajah Dowlah was among the mightiest princes of the earth.

For six long months, for a fantastical half-year, Surajah Dowlah revelled in the crazy dream of his own omnipotence. Then came retribution, swift, successive, comprehensive. Clive was upon him—Clive the unconquerable, sacking his towns, putting his garrisons to the sword, recapturing those places from which Surajah Dowlah had imagined that he had banished the Englishman for ever. The news of the tragedy of the Black Hole, and of the capture of Calcutta and Fort William, had reached Madras in August, and the warlike community had resolved upon prompt and speedy revenge. But it took time to raise the expedition, took time to despatch the expedition. In October the army of two thousand four hundred men, of which nine hundred were European troops, and fifteen hundred Sepoys, sailed for the Hooghley, under Clive as military and Admiral Watson as naval commander. Hostile winds delayed the armament until December, but when it did reach its destination it carried all before it. The luck which always attended upon Clive was still faithful to him. The Nabob, at the head of his vast hordes, was soon as eager to come to terms with Clive at the head of his little handful of men as he had before been eager to obliterate the recollection of the Englishmen from the soil of Bengal. He offered to treat with Clive; he was ready to make terms which from a military point of view were satisfactory; he was evidently convinced that he had underrated the power of England, and he was prepared to pay a heavy penalty for his blunder.

We are now approaching that chapter of Clive's career which has served his enemies with their readiest weapon, and has filled his admirers with the deepest regret. The negotiations between Clive and Surajah Dowlah were conducted on the part of all the Orientals concerned, from

Surajah Dowlah to Omichund, the wealthy Bengalee who played the part of go-between, with an amount of treachery that has not been surpassed even in the tortuous records of Oriental treachery. But unhappily the treachery was not confined to the Oriental negotiators; not confined to the wretched despot on the throne; not confined to Meer Jaffier, the principal commander of his troops, who wanted the throne for himself; not confined to the unscrupulous Omichund, who plotted with his left hand against Surajah Dowlah, and with his right hand against the English. Treachery as audacious, treachery more ingenious, treachery more successful, was deliberately practised by Clive. The brilliant and gallant soldier of fortune showed himself to be more than a match for Oriental cunning in all the worst vices of a vicious Oriental diplomacy. If Surajah Dowlah was unable to make up his miserable mind, if he alternately promised and denied, cajoled and threatened, Clive, on his side, while affecting to treat with Surajah Dowlah, was deliberately supporting the powerful conspiracy against Surajah Dowlah, the object of which was to place Meer Jaffier on the throne. If Omichund, with the keys of the conspiracy in his hand, threatened to betray all to Surajah Dowlah unless he was promised the heaviest hush-money, Clive on his side was perfectly ready to promise without the remotest intention of paying. If Omichund, wary and suspicious, was determined to have his bond in writing, Clive was quite ready to meet him with a false and fraudulent bond. Clive professed to be perfectly willing that in the secret treaty which was being drawn up between the English and Meer Jaffier a clause should be inserted promising the fulfilment of all Omichund's claims. But as Clive had not the remotest intention of satisfying those claims, he composedly prepared two treaties. One—the one by which he and Meer Jaffier were to be bound—was written on white paper, and contained no allusion to the avaricious Omichund. Another, on red paper, which was to be disregarded by the parties to the swindle, contained a paragraph according to Omichund's heart's desire. Thus bad begins, but worse remains behind. Clive, to his great astonishment, found that Admiral Watson entertained

different views from his about the honour of an English soldier and gentleman. However convenient it might be to bamboozle Omichund with a sham treaty, Admiral Watson declined to be a party to the trick by signing his name to the fraudulent document. Yet Admiral Watson's name was essential to the success of the Red Treaty, and Clive showed that he was not a man to stick at trifles. He wanted Admiral Watson's signature ; he knew that Omichund would want Admiral Watson's signature ; he satisfied himself, and he satisfied Omichund, by forging Admiral Watson's signature at the bottom of the Red Treaty.

It is simply impossible to imagine any defence of Clive's conduct in this most disgraceful business. The best that can be said for him is that the whole process of the treason was so infamous, the fabrication of the Red Treaty so revolting a piece of duplicity, that the forging of Admiral Watson's name does not materially add to the darkness of the complete transaction. Nothing can palliate Clive's conduct. It may, indeed, be said that as civilised troops after long engagements in petty wars with savage races lose that *morale* and discipline which come from contests with their military peers, so minds steeped in the degrading atmosphere of Oriental diplomacy become inevitably corrupted, and lose the fine distinction between right and wrong. But so specious a piece of special pleading cannot serve Clive's turn. English diplomacy at home and abroad has always, with the rarest exceptions, plumed itself on its truthfulness, and has often been successful by reason of that very truthfulness. The practically unanimous condemnation which Clive's countrymen then and since have passed upon his action with regard to the Red Treaty is the best answer to all such pitiful prevarications.

However, Clive did prepare a sham treaty, did forge Admiral Watson's name, did fool Omichund to the top of his bent. Omichund being thus cunningly bought over, Clive prepared for action, flung defiance at Surajah Dowlah, and marched against him. On June 23, 1757, the fate of England in India was decided by the famous battle of Plassey, or, as it should be more correctly called, Palasi.

Plassey was a great victory. Yet, in the words of the



conspirator in Ben Jonson's "Catiline," it was but "a cast at dice in Fortune's hand" that it might have been a great defeat. Clive was astonishingly, grotesquely outnumbered. The legendary deeds of chivalrous Paladins who at the head of a little body of knights sweep away whole hosts of paynims at Saragossa or Roncesvalles were rivalled by Clive's audacity in opposing his few regiments to the swollen armament of the Nabob. Moreover, Meer Jaffier, whose alliance with the English, whose treason to Surajah Dowlah, was an important part of the scheme, was not to be counted upon. He hesitated, unwilling to fling his fortunes into the English scale before he was convinced that the English were certain of success, although he was himself one of the most important factors in the possibility of that success. But the greatest danger that threatened the English arms was, curiously enough, due to Clive himself. On the eve of Plassey he held a council of war at which it was discussed whether they should fight at once or postpone fighting to what might seem a more seasonable opportunity. Clive at this council departed from his usual custom. He gave his own vote first, and he voted against taking any immediate action. Naturally enough, the majority of the council of war voted with Clive, in spite of the strenuous opposition of Major Eyre Coote and a small minority. By a majority of thirteen to seven it was resolved not to fight.

It is needless to speculate on what would have been the fortunes of the English in Bengal if that vote had settled the question. Luckily, Clive was a man of genius, and was not either afraid to admit that he had made a mistake or to change his mind. A short period of solitary reflection convinced him that he and the majority were wrong, and that Eyre Coote and the minority were right. He informed Eyre Coote of his new decision, gave the necessary orders, and the next day the battle of Plassey was fought and won.

It is not necessary here to go into the details of that momentous day. The desperate courage, daring, and skill of the English troops carried all before them: their cannonade scattered death and confusion into the Nabob's

ranks. Within an hour an army of sixty thousand men was defeated, with astonishingly slight loss to the victors; Surajah Dowlah, abandoned at the judicious moment by one traitor, Meer Jaffier, was flying for his life in obedience to the insidious counsels of another traitor, Rajah Dulab Ram. From that hour Bengal became part of the English empire.

The fate of the different actors on the Indian side was soon decided. Meer Jaffier was duly invested with the Nabob's authority over Bengal, Behar, and Orissa; Omi-chund, on learning the shameful trick of the Red Treaty, went mad, and died mad; Surajah Dowlah was soon captured and promptly killed by Meer Jaffier: the Black Hole was avenged.

Clive had now reached the pinnacle of his greatness. Victor of Plassey, governor of Bengal, he remained in India for three more resplendent years; he added to the number of his conquests by defeating the great enterprise of Shah Alum against Meer Jaffier, and shattered the Dutch descent upon the Hooghley—a descent secretly favoured by the ever-treacherous Meer Jaffier—both on land and sea. Then, with laurel victory upon his sword and smooth success strewn before his feet, Clive resolved to return again to England. He sailed from India, full of honours, in 1760, the year in which George the Second died. When he arrived in England George the Third was King. Here for the moment we must leave him, the greatest living soldier of his country, with a career of practically unbroken glory behind him. He had reached his apogee. We shall meet with him again under less happy conditions, when the sun of Plassey had begun to set.

## CHAPTER XXXIX

### CHANGES

MEANWHILE some changes were taking place in political affairs at home which were full of importance to the coming time. William Pitt had taken office; not, indeed,

an office important enough for his genius, but still one which gave him an opportunity of making his power felt. The King still detested him; all the more, perhaps, because it was now becoming more and more evident that the King would have to reckon with him as Prime Minister before very long. The stately form of Pitt was, indeed, already throwing a gigantic shadow before it. Henry Fox, too, was beginning to show himself an administrator and a debater, and, it may be added, a political intriguer, of all but consummate ability. Murray was beginning to be recognised as a great advocate, and even a great man. Lyttelton was still making brilliant way in politics, but was even yet hovering somewhat uncertain between politics and literature, destined in the end to become another illustration of the career marred for both fields by the effort to work in both fields. On the other hand, Chesterfield had given up office. He had had a dispute with his colleagues when he was strongly in favour of making a peace, and they would not have it, and he left them to go their own way. He refused the title of duke which the King offered him. He withdrew for the remainder of his years to private life, saying, "I have been behind the scenes both of pleasure and business; I have seen all the coarse pulleys and dirty ropes which exhibit and move all the gaudy machines; and I have seen and smelt the tallow candles which illuminate the whole decoration to the astonishment and admiration of the ignorant multitude." He seldom spoke in Parliament afterwards; he was growing deaf and weary. In 1751 he broke silence, and with success, when he delivered his celebrated speech on the reform of the calendar. He was "coached," as we should say now, by two able mathematicians, the Earl of Macclesfield and Mr. Bradley. The ignorant portion of the public were greatly excited by what they considered the loss of eleven days, and were strongly opposed to the whole scheme. Years later, when Mr. Bradley was sinking under mortal disease, many people ascribed his sufferings to a judgment from heaven for having taken part in that "impious undertaking."



The "impious undertaking" was a very needed scientific reform in the calendar, which had long before been adopted in some other countries. Julius Cæsar was the first great regulator of the calendar; his work in that way was not the least wonderful of his achievements. The calculations of his astronomers, however, were discovered in much later times to be "out" by eleven minutes in each year. When Pope Gregory the Thirteenth came to the throne of the Papacy, in 1572, he found that the eleven minutes had grown by mere process of time to eleven days. He started a new reform of the calendar, which was adopted at once in Italy, Spain, and Portugal. It gradually commended itself to France and Germany, and it was adopted by Denmark and Sweden in 1700. England only came into line with the reform of the calendar in 1751. The Act of Parliament which sanctioned the change brought in the use of the words "New Style" and "Old Style." Only Russia and Greece now of European countries cling to the Old Style. But the New Style, as we have said, was bitterly resented by the mob in England, and every one remembers Hogarth's picture of the patriot drunk in the gutter with his banner near him bearing the inscription "Give us back our eleven days."

Chesterfield laughed at the success of his speech on the reform of the calendar, and made little of it. Perhaps he helped thus to explain the comparative failure of his whole career. Life was to him too much of a gibe and a sarcasm, and life will not be taken on those terms.

Lord Chesterfield was then out of the running, and Lord Granville's active career had closed. The men of the older school had had their day; the new men had pushed them from their stools. The age of Walpole is closed. The age of Chatham is about to open.

Early in the year 1751 death removed one of the elements of discord from the family circle of George the Second. The end had come for Frederick, Prince of Wales. The long, unnatural struggle was brought very suddenly to a close. On the 12th of March 1751, the Prince, who had been suffering from pleurisy, went to the House of Lords, and caught a chill which brought on a relapse. "Je sens

la mort," he cried out on the 20th of March, and the Princess, hearing the cry, ran towards him and found that he was indeed dead. The general feeling of the country was perhaps not unfairly represented in the famous epigram which became the talk of the town :—

Here lies Fred,  
Who was alive and is dead.  
Had it been his father,  
I had much rather ;  
Had it been his brother,  
Still better than another ;  
Had it been his sister,  
No one would have missed her ;  
Had it been the whole generation,  
Still better for the nation.  
But since it is only Fred,  
Who was alive and is dead,  
There's no more to be said.

It is curious to contrast this grim suggestion for an epitaph on the dead Prince with the stately volume which the University of Oxford issued from the Clarendon Press :—  
"Epicedia Oxoniensia in obitum celsissimi et desideratissimi Frederici Principis Walliae." Here an obsequious vice-chancellor displayed all the splendours of a tinsel Latinity in the affectation of offering a despairing King and father such consolations for his loss as the Oxonian Muses might offer. Here Lord Viscount Stormont, in desperate imitation of Milton, did his best to teach

The mimic Nymph that haunts the winding Verge  
And oozy current of Parisian Seine

to weep for Frederick.

For well was Fred'rick loved and well deserv'd,  
His voice was ever sweet, and on his lips  
Attended ever the alluring grace  
Of gentle lowliness and social zeal.

The hind who laboured was to weep for him, and the artificer to ply his varied woof in sullen sadness, and the mariner,

Who many moons  
Has counted, beating still the foamy Surge,  
And treads at last the wish'd for beach, shall stand  
Appall'd at the sad tale.

Here all the learned languages, and not the learned languages alone, contributed their syllables of simulated despair. Many scholastic gentlemen mourned in Greek; James Stillingfleet found vent in Hebrew; Mr. Betts concealed his tears under the cloak of the Syriac speech; George Costard sorrowed in Arabic that might have amazed Abu l'Atahiyeh; Mr. Swinton's learned sock stirred him to Phœnician and Etruscan; and Mr. Evans, full of national fire and the traditions of the bards, delivered himself, and at great length too, in Welsh. The wail of this "Welsh fairy" is the fine flower of this funeral wreath of pedantic and unconscious irony.

Poor Frederick had played a little with literature in his idle time. He had amused himself with letters as he had amused himself with literary men, and sometimes with rallying a bevy of the maids of honour to the bombardment of a pasteboard citadel and a cannonade of sugar-plums. He had written verses; among the rest, a love tribute to his wife, full of rapture and enriched with the most outspoken description of her various charms of person, which, however, he assures us, were nothing to her charms of mind. Probably he was very fond of his wife; we have already said that it is likely he carried on his amours with other women chiefly because he thought it one of the duties of his princely station. Perhaps we may assume that he must have had some good qualities of his own; he certainly got little teaching or example of goodness from most of those who surrounded him in the days when he could yet have been taught.

The new heir to the throne was George, Frederick's eldest son, who was born in London on June 4, 1738, and was now, therefore, in his thirteenth year. Frederick's wife had already given birth to eight children, and was expected very soon to bring forth another. George was a seven-months' child. His health was so miserably delicate that it was believed he could not live. It was doubted at first whether it would be physically possible to rear him; and it would not have been possible if the ordinary court customs were to be followed. But the infant George was wisely handed over to the charge of a robust and healthy



young peasant woman, a gardener's wife, who took fondest care of him and adored him, and by whose early nursing he lived to be George the Third.

The year 1751, which may be said to have opened with the death of poor Frederick, closed with the death of a man greater by far than any prince of the House of Hanover. On December 12 Bolingbroke passed away. He had settled himself quietly down in his old home at Battersea, and there he died. He had outlived his closest friends and his keenest enemies. The wife—the second wife—to whom, with all his faults, he had been much devoted—was long dead. Pope and Gay, and Arbuthnot, and “Matt” Prior and Swift were dead. Walpole, his great opponent, was dead. All chance of a return to public life had faded years before. New conditions and new men had arisen. He was old—was in his seventy-fourth year; there was not much left to him to live for. There had been a good deal of the spirit of the classic philosopher about him—the school of Epictetus, not the school of Aristotle or Plato. He was a Georgian Epictetus with a dash of Gallicised grace about him. He made the most out of everything as it came, and probably got some comfort out of disappointment as well as out of success. Life had been for him one long dramatic performance, and he played it out consistently to the end. He had long believed himself a formidable enemy to Christianity—at least to revealed religion. He made arrangements by his will for the publication, among other writings, of certain essays which were designed to give Christianity its death-blow, and, having satisfactorily settled that business and disposed in advance of the faith of coming ages, he turned his face to the wall and died.

The reign of George the Second was not a great era of reform; but there was accomplished about this time a measure of reform which we cannot omit to mention. This was the Marriage Act, brought in and passed by Lord Hardwicke, the Lord Chancellor, in 1753. The Marriage Act provided that no marriage should be legal in England unless the banns had been put up in the parish church for three successive Sundays previously, or a

special licence had been obtained from the Archbishop, and unless the marriage were celebrated in the parish church. The Bill provided that any clergyman celebrating a marriage without these formalities should be liable to penal servitude for seven years. This piece of legislation put a stop to some of the most shocking and disgraceful abuses in certain classes of English social life. With other abuses went the infamous Fleet marriages—marriages performed by broken-down and disreputable clergymen whose headquarters were very commonly the Fleet prison—"couple-beggars" who would perform the marriage ceremony between any man and woman without asking questions, sometimes not even asking their names, provided they got a fee for the performance. Men of this class, a scandal to their order, and still more to the system of law which allowed them to flourish, were to be found at almost every pot-house in the populous neighbourhoods, ready to ply their trade at any moment. Perhaps a drunken young lad was brought up to be married in a half-unconscious state to some elderly prostitute: perhaps some rich young woman was carried off against her will to be married forcibly to some man who wanted her money. The Fleet parson asked no questions, did his work, and pocketed his fee—and the marriage was legal. Lord Hardwicke's Act stopped the business and relegated the Fleet parson to the pages of romance.

Years went on—years of quiet at home, save for little ministerial wrangles—years of almost uninterrupted war abroad. The peace that was patched up at Aix-la-Chapelle was evidently a peace that could not last—that was not meant to last. If no other European power would have broken it, England herself probably would, for the arrangements were believed at home to be very much to her disadvantage, and were highly unpopular. But there was no need for England to begin. The Family Compact was in full force. The Bourbons of France were determined to gain more than they had got; the Bourbons of Spain were eager to recover what they had lost. The genius and daring of Frederick of Prussia were not likely to remain inactive. As we have seen, the war between England and

France raged on in India without regard to treaties and truces on the European Continent. There was, in fact, a great trial of strength going on, and it had to be fought out. England and France had yet another stage to struggle on as well as Europe and India. They had the continent of North America. There were always some disputes about boundaries going on there; and a dispute concerning a boundary between two States which are mistrustful of one another is like a flickering flame close to a train of gunpowder. The renewal of war on the Continent gave for the first time its full chance to the genius of William Pitt as a great War Minister. The breaking out of war in North America established England as the controlling power there, and settled for ever the pretensions of France and of Spain. It is not necessary for us in this history to follow the course of the Continental wars. The great results of these to England were worked out on other soil.

## CHAPTER XL

### CANADA

WE have seen that, when the young Duke of Cumberland, after the battle of Culloden, was earning his right to the title of "Butcher," one English officer at least had the courage to protest by his actions against the atrocities of the English general. That soldier was James Wolfe, then a young lieutenant-colonel, who had served his apprenticeship to arms in the Low Countries in the war of the Austrian Succession, and earned by his courage and his abilities an honourable name. He was destined to make that name famous by the part he was to play in the events that were taking place in Canada. The red-haired, unattractive soldier, whose cold and almost repellent manner concealed some of the highest qualities, was fated to do as much for the glory of the English Empire in one part of the world as Clive in another. But there could hardly be



two men more different than Clive and Wolfe. The one was always an adventurer, a gentleman adventurer, indeed, and a brilliant specimen of the class, but an adventurer still, and with some of the worst vices of his kind. Wolfe, on the contrary, resembled more the better men among those Puritan soldiers who rallied around the name of Cromwell and battled beneath the standards of Monk. He cherished an austere ideal of public and private virtue. The sweet, simple gravity of the man's nature lives for us very vividly in the portrait Thackeray draws of him in the pages of "The Virginians," where so many of the famous figures of the crowded last century world seem to take bodily shape again and live and move around us.

From the end of the fifteenth century, when John and Sebastian Cabot discovered Canada, France considered that portion of the new world as her own. Early in the sixteenth century a French expedition under Verazani formed a settlement named New France, and eleven years later the Breton Jacques Cartier ascended the Saint Lawrence as far as the site of Montreal. The first permanent settlement was made in 1608, when Quebec was founded. From that time Quebec seems like the prize for which English and French arms are to strive. Canada was taken by the English in 1629, only to be restored in 1632; but when more than a century later France and England were newly at war, the serious and final struggle for the possession of Canada took place.

The French settlements in America were called Canada and Louisiana. The one comprehended the basin of the Saint Lawrence river and the great lakes, with a vast extent of territory west and north to the Pacific and Arctic oceans. It was, as has been happily said, a convenient maxim in those days of our colonisation, that whoever possessed the coast had a right to all the inland territory as far as from sea to sea. While this gave England its boundaries from north to south, it left from east to west open to French fancy and French ambition. Louisiana was a term which covered in English eyes only the Mississippi mouths and a few stations along the Mississippi and Ohio valleys; in French minds the

term extended to all the territory bounded to the north by Canada and to the south by Mexico, and stretching from the Alleghanies to the Pacific.

The French settlements in Canada were administered very much upon the same happy-go-lucky system as that which prevailed in France at home under the beneficent influence of the Old Order, and which at home was slowly and surely preparing the way for the French Revolution. The Ministers in Paris governed the colonies through governors who were supreme in their own districts, but who possessed no power whatever of initiating any laws for the people they swayed.

The English colonies were very different from those of the French. Founded in the early days of religious persecution by men too strong-minded to accept tyranny or to make composition with their consciences, the new colonies of Englishmen in America had thriven in accordance with the antique spirit of independence which had called them into existence. The colonists were a hardy, a stubborn, and a high-minded people, well fitted to battle with the elements and the Indians, and to preserve, under new conditions, the austere standard of morality which led them to look for liberty across the sea. The creed which they professed endowed them with the capacity for self-government, and taught them the arts of administration and the polity of free States. The English colonies, as they throve and extended, were not without their faults. The faith which their founders professed was a gloomy faith, and left its mark in gloom upon the characters of the people and the tenor of their laws. The Ironside quality of their creed showed itself in the cruelties with which they visited the Indians; the severity of their tenets was felt by all who could not readily adapt themselves to the adamant ethics of men of the type of Endicott and Mather. There was not wanting, too, a spirit of lawlessness in the English America, curiously in contrast with the law-abiding character of the Nonconformist colonisations. Along the seaboard wild pirates nestled, skimmers of the seas of the most daring type, worthy brethren of the Kidds, the Blackbeards, and the Teaches, terrors of the merchantman and

the well-disposed emigrant. But in spite of the sternness of the law-abiding, and the savageness of the lawless portions of the English settlements, they contrasted favourably in every way with the settlements which were nominally French and the centres of colonisation which hoisted the French flag.

After a long stretch of threatened hostilities, the pinch came at last in 1753, when the two nations met on the banks of the Ohio, and the meeting meant one of the greatest and most momentous series of wars in the century. French soldiers invaded the settlements of the Ohio Company and drove the settlers out. The governor of Virginia sent an ambassador to the French officer commanding on the Ohio, and chose as his ambassador a young Virginian gentleman then absolutely unknown except to the small circle of his personal friends, but destined to become one of the most famous, and most deservedly famous, men in history. Young Mr. George Washington bore Governor Dinwiddie's message over 500 miles through the wilderness at the peril of his life. That expedition, says Irving, "may be considered the foundation of his fortunes. From that moment he was the rising hope of Virginia." The French commander informed the young envoy that he proposed to hold Ohio and drive the English out. Back went George Washington through the wilderness again with this discouraging reply. After that hostilities were inevitable. The next year Washington, then lieutenant-colonel, led a small force to the frontier, and fired the first shot against the enemy. It is curious to think of all the results that followed from that first shot. The fall of the French colonies in America, the establishment of the American Republic, the French Revolution—all may, by the simplest process of causation, be traced back to the first shot fired by Washington's command against a petty officer on the frontier. That shot echoes on the Plains of Abraham, at Lexington and Bunker's Hill, at the taking of the Bastille, and with the "whiff of grapeshot"; we may hear it at Waterloo and in the autumn horrors of the Coup d'État.

France had long been ambitious of extending the domain



of her colonial empire in America. Her aim was to secure for herself the Mississippi and Ohio valleys. Securing these meant many things to France. It meant the connection of her Mexican colonies with Canada, but it meant much more than this : it meant serious annoyance to England, serious limitation to English commerce. It would make the Alleghany mountains the western limits of the English colonies, hamper the English trade with the Indians, and expose to French attack the English on the north, south, and west. In this year 1754, therefore, she deliberately drove the English out of West Pennsylvania, and set up her staff there by building Fort Duquesne to command the Ohio valley. At that time the chief British commander in America was General Braddock, a joyous, rollicking soldier of the old-fashioned type, rather popular in London as a good companion and good fellow, who loved his glass with a more than merely convivial enthusiasm. But he was not the sort of man who was fitted to fight the French just then and there. In the open field and under ordinary conditions he might have done well enough, but the war with France in the American colonies was not pursued under ordinary conditions. It was fought on the lines of Indian warfare, with murderous Indian allies, against whom the jolly general of the London tables and the St. James's clubs was wholly unfitted to cope. Though he had been warned by Sir P. K. Halkett, who knew the danger, Braddock actually insisted upon advancing with astonishing recklessness against Fort Duquesne as if he were marching at the head of an invincible force to the easiest possible success. The result of his heedlessness is one of the grimmest spots in English colonial history.

Braddock's forces were cut to pieces : very few of his stout thousand escaped to spread horror through the English colonies by the news of their misfortunes. The banner of the Leopard had gone down indeed before the white coats and the Silver Lilies of France and the painted fantasies of Indian braves and Sachems. The fair hair of English soldiers graced the wigwams of the wild and remorseless Red Man, and it seemed for the moment as if the fighting

power of England had gone. But, indeed, English fighting power was made of sterner stuff. The fact is, perhaps, never more happily exemplified than in this very story of the dying Braddock himself. As he was carried away, bleeding, to his death, from that fatal ambushade, something of the hero animated and exalted the spirit of that drink-hardy and foolhardy soldier. "I must do better another time," he is reported to have said; and it would not be easy to say with what gallanter words a stout soldier could go to his account. Against such a spirit as that which animated the dying Braddock the soldiers of France were not destined to triumph. "The last of the Gracchi," said Mirabeau, "when dying, flung dust to Heaven, and from that dust sprang Marius." Braddock, promising himself to do better next time, spoke not indeed for himself, but for his nation. The next time came in its due season, but the man who "did better," who carried that "banner of the Leopard" high over the Lilies, was not Braddock, but James Wolfe.

England thirsted for revenge. The years came and the years went, and at last they brought the hour and the men. An elaborate campaign in 1759 had been prepared, by which Amherst, coming by Lake George, Ticonderoga, and Lake Champlain; Prideaux and Johnson coming by Fort Niagara, Lake Ontario, and Montreal; and Wolfe coming by the Saint Lawrence river, were to unite in attacking Quebec. But the first two divisions of the whole force were unable to make the connection in the due time, and to Wolfe's command alone was given the honour of assailing Quebec. He advanced up the Saint Lawrence with some 7000 men and the fleet under Admiral Saunders, and encamped on the Island of Saint Orleans in the Saint Lawrence river, some eight miles from Quebec. The whole world, perhaps, hardly holds a scene more picturesque, whether looked at from above or from below, from the rock or from the river, than that which is given by the city of Quebec. At some places the bold mass of rock and clay descends almost sheer to the lower level and the river shore. One can see that splendid heap of rock and clay from the distant Falls of Montmorency, standing out

as the Acropolis of Athens or as Acrocorinth may be seen from some far-off point of view. The newer part of the city and the fortifications are perched high upon the great mound or mass of clay and rock, which looks over the confluence of a mighty river and a great stream. The lower and older town creeps and straggles along the base of the rock and by the edges of the river. Here are the old market-places, the quaint old streets, the ancient wharfs, the crumbling houses, the narrow lanes, the curious inlets, of past generations, and the crude shanties of yesterday and the day before yesterday. From this lower level broad roads now wind up to what would be called the better part of the city—the region of the hotels, and the clubs, and the official buildings, and the fashionable residences. But until lately these roads passed under the ancient gateways of the city—gateways that reminded one of the Gate of Calais, and brought back suggestions of Hogarth's famous picture. In more recent years, however, the restless spirit of modern improvement has invaded even Quebec, and all, or nearly all, the ancient gateways, the gateways of the days of Wolfe, have bowed to the fate of Temple Bar. Yet even to-day the traveller in Canada who stands upon that height may vividly recall the scene that lay before the eyes of Wolfe during that memorable campaign.

Wolfe made an attempt to carry a battery above the Montmorency mouth, but failed, and was repulsed with considerable loss. He then cast about him if it were possible to attack the town from the Heights of Abraham on the southern side. It seemed on the face of it an impossibility. How was it possible for the attacking force to make its way unseen by the French up the precipitous cliffs to the Heights of Abraham? Luckily there was a young man in Wolfe's army, a Lieutenant M'Culloch, who had been held prisoner in Quebec in 1756. With a view to future possibilities, he employed his time in surveying the cliffs, and he thought that he had discovered a particular spot where the steep hills might be successfully scaled by an attacking force. He now communicated this to Wolfe. Indeed, the idea of attack in this way seems to have been



suggested by him, and on the memorable September night the attempt was made.

Who has not heard—who has not been touched and thrilled by the story of Wolfe, while being rowed across the spreading waters of the Saint Lawrence to the cove where the attempt was to be made, repeating in low tones to his officers near him Gray's "Elegy in a Country Churchyard"? Who does not remember Wolfe's famous saying that he would rather have written the *Elegy* than take Quebec? It is a fine saying, akin to that of Cæsar when he swore that he would rather be the first man in an obscure Italian village than the second man in Rome. We may perhaps take the liberty of questioning the absolute accuracy of either saying. In Cæsar's case he was, no doubt, sufficiently conscious that he was going to be the first man in Rome. In Wolfe's case we may well believe that his exquisite tribute to literature, and to the most beautiful work of one of the most charming men of letters then alive, was not meant very seriously. He was a soldier; Quebec was his duty; Quebec was to be his fame. But it is one of those sayings that live for ever, and the mere thought of it at once calls up two widely different pictures, pictures of places in two widely different parts of the world. One shows the shining, swelling Saint Lawrence river and the dead hour of night, and those slowly-moving boats of hushed heroes creeping across the waters to where the mighty Quebec hills gloomed hugely out. The other is of that quiet churchyard in England, at Stoke Pogis, near Slough, where pilgrims from many parts of the world still wander through the pleasant Buckinghamshire fields to stand where Gray conceived his *Elegy*.

Wolfe carried out his plan to perfection. Day was dawning as the majority of his forces formed upon the Heights of Abraham. It was six in the morning before Montcalm's irregulars were upon the field, and nine o'clock before the French army was in position for action. At ten o'clock the battle began. It did not last very long. Whether the French were utterly disheartened or not by the appearance so unexpectedly of the English on the ground which they had deemed unassailable, certain is it that

they made a poor fight of it. Though the French forces amounted to nearly double the English strength, the whole battle from the first French advance to their utter rout and flight did not last a quarter of an hour. It was one of the sharpest and strangest battles in history. Both sides lost their generals. Montcalm was killed; Wolfe, charging gallantly at the head of his men, fell mortally wounded. The wild cry, "They run!" echoed in his dying ears. He seemed to recover a kind of alertness at the sound, and, shaking himself from his deadly stupor, asked, "Who run?" We can imagine the momentary trepidation in that gallant heart: could it be his outnumbered followers? In a moment he was reassured; it was the enemy who fled; with his last breath he gave some strategical orders, and then fell back. "God be praised, I die in peace," he said, and so passed away. The time may, perhaps, come when the great game of war will no longer stir the pulses, and men will no longer feel that they die in peace after the bloody defeat of their enemies. But so long as the pulses of men's hearts do answer to any martial music, so long men will say of Wolfe that he died well as became a soldier, a hero, and a gentleman. He sleeps in Greenwich Church.

The pride of England's Colonial Empire might find new stimulus in the way in which the memory of one of the most brilliant scenes in the story of England's career is kept green in Quebec. The traveller, standing on Dufferin Terrace to-day, may in his mind's eye see Wolfe crossing the stream on his perilous expedition, may in his mind's ear hear him reciting to his officers those lines from Gray's *Elegy*, and telling them that he would rather have written such verses than be sure of taking Quebec. His monument is near to the promenade on Dufferin Terrace—his monument which, a rare event in war, is the monument also of his rival, the French commander, Montcalm, killed in the hour of defeat, as Wolfe was at the moment of victory. Quebec itself seems to illustrate in its own progress and its own history the moral of that common monument. Quebec is as loyal to the British Crown as Victoria or as the Channel Islands. But it is still in great part an

old-fashioned French city. The France that survives there and all through the province is not the France of to-day, but the France of before the great Revolution. The stranger seeking his way through the streets had better in most cases question the first crossing-sweeper he meets in French, and not in English. The English residents are all expected to speak French. But the English residents and the French live on terms of the most cordial fraternity. Little quarrels, local quarrels of race and sect, do unquestionably spring up here and there now and again, but they are only like the disputes of Churchmen and Dissenters in an English city, and they threaten no organic controversy. England has great reason to be proud of Quebec. The English flag has a home on those heights which we have already said may challenge the world for bold picturesqueness and beauty.

## CHAPTER XLI

### THE CLOSE OF THE REIGN

IN the early days of the year 1753 literature and philosophy lost a great man by the death of Bishop Berkeley. We have already in a former volume told the story of Berkeley's early life and of his early philosophical writings which belonged to the reign of Queen Anne, and of his great theory of idealism, in which he affirmed that there is no proof of the existence of matter anywhere save in our own perceptions. Berkeley came to London in 1713, the year before Queen Anne's death, and made the acquaintance of his great countryman, Swift. The Dean was a great patron of Berkeley's in those early London days. Swift took Berkeley to court, and introduced him or spoke of him to all the great Ministers, and pushed his fortunes by all the ways—and they were many—in his power. Berkeley, with the aid of Swift, was soon made free of that wonderful republic of letters which then held sway in London, and which numbered amongst its



members such men as Steele and Addison, Bolingbroke and Harley, Gay and Arbuthnot, and Pope. Berkeley was in Addison's box at the first performance of "Cato," and tasted of the author's champagne and burgundy there, and listened with curious delight to the mingled applause and hisses that greeted Mr. Pope's prologue. A little later Berkeley went to Italy as the travelling tutor, the bear-leader, of the son of Ashe, Bishop of Clogher. In Italy he passed some four enchanted years.

Berkeley came back to England in 1720 to find all England writhing in the welter and chaos of the South Sea crash. The shame and misery of the time appear to have inspired him with a kind of horror of the hollow civilisation of the age, and to have given him his first promptings towards that ideal community in the remote Atlantic to which his mind turned so strongly a little later. He left England speedily, and came home again to Ireland after an absence of eight years. It was in Ireland that a strange windfall came to him and amazed him. On that fatal afternoon when Swift, with a legion of wild passions tearing at his heart-strings, rode over to Marley Abbey to fling back at Vanessa's feet the letter she had written to Stella, Hester Vanhomrigh received her death-blow. But she lived long enough to inflict a curious little piece of vengeance, the only vengeance in her power, except the nobler revenge of forgiveness, upon the false Cadenus. She had left by will all the property she possessed to the man she had so madly worshipped. With the hand of death upon her, with the raging eyes of the Dean still burning upon her brain, she performed the one little pitiful act of retaliation which is the saddest spot in all her sad history; she altered her will, and disinherited her idol. For the name of Jonathan Swift, Dean of St. Patrick's, she substituted the name of another great Irishman, another great Churchman, another great thinker and teacher, the name of George Berkeley, Dean—only nominally so, indeed—of Dromore. Berkeley's first idea on receiving this unexpected windfall was to employ the money thus almost miraculously placed at his disposal in carrying out a scheme which had long been dear to

his heart. This scheme was that he should emigrate to Bermuda, should settle there, and devote the rest of his life to "the reformation of manners among the English in our Western plantations, and the propagation of the Gospel among the American savages." He was nobly convinced of the nobility of his dream, and, which was more remarkable, he succeeded in awaking a latent nobility in unexpected places, and in arousing an enthusiasm for this dream of a Bermudan Utopia even in callous hearts and unsympathetic bosoms.

Bermuda became for a while the fashion in the marvelous medley of London society over which the first of the Georges reigned. People talked Bermuda, thought Bermuda, wrote Bermuda. He was indeed a remarkable man whose missionary zeal and eloquence could make Bermuda popular in London with the voice of religion. He was indeed a remarkable man who could impress for a moment the cynical nature of Bolingbroke with something of the fire of his own enthusiasm; who could induce Walpole to swell from his own pocket the subscription-list that was raised to further Berkeley's schemes; who actually succeeded in touching the callous organism which the Elector of Hanover and King of England called a heart; and whose one joy on hearing of the Vanessa legacy was at the aid it afforded to his voyage and his pure, unselfish aspirations. Bermuda ever remained a vision for him; but in 1728 he set sail for Rhode Island in the company of his young wife, Miss Anne Forster, whom, as he quaintly tells us, he chose "for her qualities of mind and her unaffected inclination to books." For more than three years he dwelt in America a simple, happy, earnest life. But the mission was a failure. To Robert Walpole Berkeley's plans and hopes would naturally seem about as deserving of the attention and aid of practical men as the ambitions of Don Quixote. The grant promised by the Government was never sent out, and in 1731 Berkeley came back to England. How many of those who are familiar with the line, "Westward the course of empire takes its way," which has been accepted as the motto for one of the best and best-known frescoes that adorn the Capitol in

Washington, know that it comes from the last verse of a poem which Berkeley wrote as he was striving to realise a New Atlantis in Rhode Island?

Westward the course of empire takes its way ;  
The first four acts already past,  
A fifth shall close the drama with the day ;  
Time's noblest offspring is the last.

Two years of literary and philosophic life in London succeeded to the Rhode Island idyll. In 1734 he returned to Ireland for the last time, and dwelt for eighteen years in his bishopric of Cloyne in studious seclusion with his family, wandering among the myrtle-hedges his own hand planted, reading Plato and Hooker, teaching his cherished daughter, suffering from domestic losses, and proclaiming to an astounded world that tar-water was a panacea for all human ills. Berkeley's genius and his eloquent prose made tar-water as popular as both had made Bermuda some twenty years earlier. The later years of his life at Cloyne are tinged with melancholy. His mind began to be agitated anew with the dream of an academic retreat by other streams than the Blackwater and the Lee, and in 1752 he journeyed again to England and set up his tent for the last time beneath the shadow of the Oxford spires. It was mellow autumn when he came to the City of Scholars. In the chill January weather of the following year he died suddenly and peacefully in the midst of his family. He was a great and a good man. The serene purity of his life, his lofty purposes, his nobility of nature, cause him to stand out very conspicuously in the strange, cynical, cruel world of English life and English thought during the first half of the eighteenth century. He was in that world, but he was never of it. His friends were either noble of life and mind, or else he saw in them only their nobler qualities, and took no thought of or no harm from the rest. He seems to have been most happy—and the fact is characteristic of the man—in the society of the sweet, simple, and studious woman who made him a loving wife, and of the children whom he loved with an affection for the excess



of which he sometimes reproached himself. All his contemporaries, says Sir James Mackintosh, agreed with Pope in ascribing

To Berkeley every virtue under heaven.

In 1754 Henry Pelham died. The important consequence of his death was the fact that it gave Pitt at last an opportunity of coming to the front. The Duke of Newcastle, Henry Pelham's brother, became leader of the Administration, with Henry Fox for Secretary at War, Pitt for Paymaster-General of the Forces, and Murray, afterwards to be famous as Lord Mansfield, for Attorney-General. There was some difficulty about the leadership of the House of Commons. Pitt was still too much disliked by the King to be available for the position. Fox for a while refused to accept it, and Murray was unwilling to do anything which might be likely to withdraw him from the professional path along which he was to move to such distinction. An attempt was made to get on with a Sir Thomas Robinson, a man of no capacity for such a position, and the attempt was soon an evident failure. Then Fox consented to take the position on Newcastle's own terms, which were those of absolute submission to the dictates of Newcastle. Later still he was content to descend to a subordinate office which did not even give him a place in the Cabinet. Fox never recovered the damage which his reputation and his influence suffered by this amazing act; the only explanation for which was found in the fact that he loved money better than anything in the world, and that the office of Paymaster-General gave almost limitless opportunities to a rapacious and unscrupulous man.

The Duke of Newcastle's Ministry soon fell. Newcastle was not a man who had the slightest capacity for controlling or directing a policy of war; and the great struggle known as the Seven Years' War had now broken out. One lamentable event in the war has to be recorded, although it was but of minor importance. This was the capture of Minorca by the French, under the romantic, gallant, and profligate Duc de Richelieu. The event is memorable chiefly, or only, because it was followed by the trial and

execution of the unfortunate Admiral Byng. Admiral Byng, the son of a famous sailor, was sent in command of a small and a very poorly furnished squadron to the Mediterranean to relieve Minorca. When he reached Gibraltar he found that a French fleet much superior in numbers to his own was blockading the island he was sent to relieve. Byng called a council of war, and the council decided that, as they had no instructions from home how to act in the event of their finding themselves face to face with a superior force, they had better not interfere with the doings of the enemy. Still Byng made for Minorca, and tried unsuccessfully to open communications with the garrison. He had a slight engagement with the French, and then he brought his squadron away. The news created such an outburst of passion in England that the Duke of Newcastle made up his mind at once to sacrifice Byng to the popular fury. Byng was tried at Spithead, found guilty of having failed in his duty, and shot on March 14, 1757. He died like a brave man. It went heavily against Newcastle in later days that he was believed to have promised the sacrifice of Byng before the trial had even begun. No one now believes that Byng was a coward; and nothing but a miracle could have enabled him with such a force to save Minorca. But he failed sadly in his duty, whether from stupidity or irresolution: and probably he would not have cared to outlive his degradation. The punishment was stern and harsh indeed, but it was a time to excuse sternness on the part of a Government on whom had fallen the conduct of a great war. Pitt did his best to induce the King to mitigate the penalty in accordance with the unanimous recommendation of the court-martial; but George was inflexible, and reminded Pitt that he had himself taught the Sovereign to seek outside the House of Commons for the judgment of the English people. It was to the execution of Byng that Voltaire applied the famous epigram—"In England it is thought necessary to kill an admiral from time to time to encourage the others"—"*pour encourager les autres.*" Voltaire tried hard to save Byng, and even induced the Duc de Richelieu to write a letter bearing his personal testimony to the unfortunate admiral's courage.

The Duke of Newcastle resigned office, and for a short time the Duke of Devonshire was at the head of a coalition Ministry which included Pitt. The King, however, did not stand this long, and one day suddenly turned them all out of office. Then a coalition of another kind was formed, which included Newcastle and Pitt, with Henry Fox in the subordinate position of Paymaster. Pitt now for the first time had it all his own way. He ruled everything in the House of Commons. He flung himself with passionate and patriotic energy into the alliance with that great Frederick whose genius and daring were like his own. Pitt was a heaven-born War Minister. His courage and his resources changed the whole fortunes of the war. He seemed a statesman to organise victory. He stirred up the languishing patriotism of the hour, and filled it with new and noble inspiration. It was true what George had said to him, that he had taught, or tried to teach, the Sovereign to seek outside the House of Commons for the voice of the English people. But this was to the honour of Pitt, and not to his discredit. Pitt saw that a legislature returned on such a representation could be no spokesman of the English people. He knew that intelligence and education were beginning to spread with increased wealth through large unrepresented classes and even communities. While he had the people behind him he cared little for the Sovereign, and still less for the House of Commons. His pride was as great as his patriotism; he might be broken but he could not bend. At last he had found his true place—at the head of a great nation and during a grand national crisis.

The closing years of George's reign were honoured by some literary triumphs in which George himself could have taken but little interest. In 1755 appeared, in two volumes folio, the English Dictionary by Samuel Johnson. We shall meet with Samuel Johnson a good deal in the future course of this history, and have now only to mention as a fact the publication of the work on which he himself believed his fame was to rest. Another work of a very different kind and by a very different sort of man appeared in 1759—the first and second volume of "Tristram Shandy" by Laurence Sterne.



Seldom, perhaps, has an author experienced a stranger bringing up than that which fell to the lot of Sterne. His father, Roger Sterne, was one of those luckless persons who seem to be the especial sport of a malicious destiny, in whose hands nothing prospers, from whose hands thievish fortune filches all opportunities. Roger Sterne was a gentleman of good family and narrow means, who had adopted arms as his profession and had not prospered therein. He had married a wife who was herself a sutler's widow, and who blessed Ensign Sterne with a swift and steady succession of offspring, of whom Laurence was the second. It was chance, acting through the impulses of the War Office, which caused little Laurence to see the light on Irish soil; but, though he was born in the melodiously-named Valley of Honey, there was little of honeyed sweetness, and much bitterness as of gall and coloquintida, in his early boyhood. Poverty and the eccentric evolutions of a marching regiment contributed to make his a most unenviable childhood. The record, as we can read it in his own account, is disastrous and dreary enough. The regiment to which Roger Sterne belonged was perpetually on the move; the births and deaths of Mrs. Sterne's children succeeded each other with painful rapidity; again and again was little Laurence in imminent peril of shipwreck on the stormiest seas; he experienced in his earliest years all that was worst and most disagreeable in the life of camp-followers. Some account must necessarily be taken of this by those who review Sterne's writings. A child brought up under such conditions is not likely to have a very keen appreciation of the finer phases of life, and must inevitably have a precocious and most unfortunate familiarity with the seamy side of existence. What is commonly called knowledge of the world, which means knowledge of what is worst in the world, as "seeing life" generally means seeing its dirtiest places, undoubtedly Sterne got in plenty, and the future divine was not improved by the education of the camp.

The misfortunes that had attended so persistently upon the career of Roger Sterne culminated at last most tragically, yet at the same time most ludicrously, as if destiny had

determined to the end to make the luckless ensign her sport. At Gibraltar a quarrel with another officer "about a goose" resulted in a duel. Roger Sterne was run through the body. He never recovered from the wound, and though in this harsh world he drew his breath in pain a little longer, he died in Jamaica of fever, which found his enfeebled frame a ready victim. One of the few pleasing characteristics in Laurence Sterne's nature is his affectionate memory of his father; one of the most pleasing passages of all his writings is that in which he describes him. "My father was a little, smart man, active to the last degree in all exercises, most patient of fatigue and disappointment, of which it had pleased God to give him full measure. He was in his temper somewhat rapid and hasty,"—hence, no doubt, the speaking of hot words and the spilling of hot blood over that ill-omened goose—"but of a kindly, sweet disposition, void of all design, and so innocent in his intentions that he suspected no one, so that you might have cheated him ten times a day if nine had not been sufficient for your purpose."

Through Halifax School and Cambridge sizarship Laurence Sterne passed, by the patronage of his pluralist uncle, Jacques Sterne, into holy orders and the living of Sutton-on-the-Forest, and so into twenty years of almost complete obscurity. We know that he married, that he preached, played the fiddle, fished, hunted, and read, and that is about all we know. Then quite suddenly in 1759 the lazy, lounging, most eccentric, and ill-chosen clergyman enraptured London by the publication of the first two volumes of "Tristram Shandy."

The author of "Tristram Shandy" came to town, and was received with more than Roman triumph. Wealth, wit, genius, nobility thronged his door, sought his friendship, proffered favours. Sterne revelled in this new life. London offered him a cup of the most intoxicating quality, and he drank and drank again of its sparkling fountain without ever quenching his thirst for popularity, for flattery, for success. Flattery, popularity, success—all three he had in plenty for eight resplendent years. Volume after volume of "Tristram Shandy" wooed and won public applause.

Sterne travelled abroad, and found the same adulation in other great capitals of Europe that he had enjoyed in London. When the popularity of "Shandy" appeared to be waning, and the fame of its author to be dwindling, he whipped it up again with the "Sentimental Journey." We may finish his story by anticipation. He died one of the most tragic deaths recorded in the necrology of genius. He died in London on March 18, 1768, and he died alone. The wish he had expressed of expiring at an inn untroubled by the presence of mourning friends was grimly gratified. In lonely lodgings, beneath the speculative gaze of a memoir-writing footman and the care of hired hands, Sterne gasped out the words "Now it is come," and so died. He was buried almost unattended, and his body was stolen from its new-made grave by resurrectionists, and recognised, when half-dissected, on an anatomist's table by a horrified friend. So the story goes—not, indeed, absolutely authentic, but certainly not absolutely without credit—the melancholy conclusion of an ill-spent life and a splendid ill-used intellect.

For his conduct to his wife his memory has been scourged by Thackeray and by his latest biographer, Mr. H. D. Traill. It cannot be too severely scourged. He took her youth, he took her money, and he tired of her, and was untrue to her, and spoke against her in the dastardly letters he wrote to his friends and in which he has gibbeted himself to all time as a hideous warning, a sort of sentimental scarecrow. "As to the nature of Sterne's love affairs," says Mr. Traill, "I have come, though not without hesitation, to the conclusion that they were most, if not all of them, what is called, somewhat absurdly, platonic. . . . But as I am not one of those who hold that the conventionally 'innocent' is the equivalent of the morally harmless in this matter, I cannot regard the question as worth any very minute investigation. I am not sure that the habitual male flirt, who neglects his wife to sit continually languishing at the feet of some other woman, gives much less pain and scandal to others or does much less mischief to himself and the objects of his adoration than the thorough-going profligate."



One of the greatest of German writers, Jean Paul Richter, declares more than once that he regards Sterne as his master. The statement is amazing. Jean Paul Richter, Jean Paul the Only One, as he was fondly called, was immeasurably sincerer than his master. All that was sham, tinsel, and tawdry in the writings of Yorick was genuine, heartfelt, and soul-inspiring in Jean Paul. Yorick's sentiment was pinchbeck; Jean Paul's was pure gold. All that Richter ever wrote is animated with the deepest religious feeling, the tenderest sympathy, the gentlest and bravest pity. Yorick, in the black and white of his sacred calling's gown and bands, grins and leers like a disguised satyr. His morality is a mummer's mask; his pathos is pretence; the only thing truly Irish about him is his humour, his ceaseless wit, the unfailing sparkle of his fancy.

Quite suddenly the ghastly tragi-comedy of the King's life came to an end. There was, we are told, a strange affectation of an incapacity to be sick that ran through the whole Royal Family, which they carried so far that few of them were more willing to own any other member of the family ill than to acknowledge themselves to be so. "I have known the King," says Hervey, "get out of his bed choking with a sore throat, and in a high fever, only to dress and have a levée, and in five minutes undress and return to his bed till the same ridiculous farce of health was to be presented the next day at the same hour." It must be owned, however, that George made a stout fight against ill-health, and if he shammed being well he kept up the sham for a good long time. He came into the world more than a dozen years before Lord Hervey was born, and he contrived to keep his place in it for some seventeen years after Lord Hervey had died. Time had nearly come round with George as with Shakespeare's Cassius; his death fell very near to his birthday. George was born on October 30, 1683, and on October 25, 1760, he was on the verge of completing his seventy-seventh year. On October 25, 1760, he woke early, as was his custom, drank his chocolate, enquired as to the quarter whence the wind came, and talked of a walk in the garden. That walk in the garden was never taken. The page who attended

on the King had left the room. He heard a groan and the sound of a fall. He came back, and found the King a helpless heap upon the floor. "Call Amelia," the dying man gasped, but before Amelia could be called he was dead. Amelia, when she came, being a little deaf, did not grasp at once the full extent of what had happened, and bent over her father only to learn in the most startling and shocking manner that her father was dead. The Countess of Walmoden, too, was sent for. It would seem as if the ample charms of the Countess of Walmoden, which had delighted George so much while he lived, might have some power to conjure him back from the common doom of kings. But George the Second was dead beyond the power of all the fat and painted women in the world to help. "Friends," says Thackeray in his Essay, "he was your fathers' King as well as mine; let us drop a respectful tear over his grave." But indeed it is very hard to drop a respectful tear over the grave of George the Second. Seldom has any man been a king with fewer kingly qualities. He had courage, undoubtedly—courage enough to be habitually described by the Jacobites as "the Captain," but his courage was the courage of a captain and not of a king. He was obstinate, he was narrow-minded, he was selfish, he was repulsively and even ridiculously incontinent. The usual quantity of base and servile adulation was poured over the royal coffin. The same abject creatures—they or their kind—that had rhymed their lying verses over the dead Prince of Wales who had hated his father, now rhymed their lying verses over the dead King who had hated his son. If George the Second had been a more common man, instead of being Elector of Hanover and King of England, one might have said of him frankly enough that he was a person about as little to be admired as a man well could be who was not a coward or in the ordinary sense of the term a criminal. But because he was a crowned king, it was regarded as a patriotic duty then to make much of the departed monarch and to talk of him in the strain which would have been appropriate if he had been a Marcus Aurelius. The best, perhaps, that can

be said of him is that, on the whole, all things considered, he might have been worse. It would be unfair to a George who has, at a long interval, to succeed him, to say that George the Second was actually the worst of his line and name; but he was so little, so very little, worthy, that the fulsome pens must have laboured in his praise. If many people rejoiced at his removal, it would be hard to say who grieved, with the exception of a few, a select few, of his family and the hangers-on of the Walmoden type, to whom his existence was the essential figure in their own existence. To the vast bulk of the English people the matter was of no moment whatever. All that they knew was that a second George, who was Elector of Hanover, had passed away from the English throne, and that a third George, who was Elector of Hanover, had mounted into the vacant seat.

Never was a King better served than George the Second; never had so ignoble a Sovereign such men to make his kingdom strong and his reign famous. He began his time of royalty under the protection of the sturdy figure of Walpole; he closed it under the protection of the stately form of Pitt.

## CHAPTER XLII

### “SUPREME IRONIC PROCESSION”

For six and forty years England had been ruled by German princes. One Elector of Hanover named George had been succeeded by another Elector of Hanover named George, and George the First and George the Second, George the father and George the son, resembled each other in being by nature German rather than English, and by inclination Electors of Hanover rather than Kings of England. Against each of them a Stuart prince had raised a standard and an army. George the First had his James Francis Edward, who called himself James the Third, and whom his opponents called the Pretender, by a translation which gave



an injurious signification to the French word, "prétendant." George the Second had his Charles Edward, the Young Pretender who a generation later led an invading army well into England before he had to turn and fly for his life. A very different condition of things awaited the successor of George the Second. George the Second's grandson was an English prince and an Englishman. He was born in England; his father was born in England; his native tongue was the English tongue; and if he was the Elector of Hanover, that seemed an accident. The title was as unimportant and trivial to the King of England as his title of King of France was unreal and theatrical. The remnant of the Jacobites could not with truth call the heir to the throne a foreigner, and they could not in reason hope to make such a demonstration in arms against him as they had made against his grandfather and his great-grandfather. The young King came to a much safer throne under much more favourable auspices than either of the two monarchs, his kinsmen and his namesakes, who had gone before him.

The young King heard the first formal news of his accession to the throne from the lips of no less stately a personage than the Great Commoner himself—the foremost Englishman then alive. George the Third, as he then actually was, had received at Kew Palace some messages which told him that his grandfather was sinking fast, that he was dying, that he was dead. George resolved to start for London. On his way, and not far from Kew, he was met by a coach and six which from the blue and silver liveries he knew to be that of Mr. Pitt. George received the congratulations of his great Minister—the great Minister whom, as it was soon to appear, he understood so little and esteemed so poorly. Then Pitt, turning his horses' heads, followed his Sovereign into London. Never perhaps in English history was a young King welcomed on his accession by so great a Minister. Among the many auspicious conditions which surrounded the early days of George the Third's reign not the least auspicious was the presence of such a bulwark to the throne and to the realm. For the name of Pitt was now feared and honoured in every civilised country in the world. It had become synonymous

with the triumphs and the greatness of England. Pitt was the greatest War Minister England had yet known. He was the first English statesman who illustrated in his own person the difference between a War Minister and a Minister of War.

Truly this journey of the King and the Prime Minister from Kew to London was what George Meredith calls a "supreme ironic procession, with laughter of gods in the background." The ignorant, unwise young King led the way, the greatest living statesman in England followed after. One can hardly imagine a procession more supremely ironic. Almost all the whole range of human intellect was stretched out and exhausted by the living contrast between the King who went first and the Minister who meekly went second. Pitt had made for young George the Third a great empire, which it was the work of George the Third not long after to destroy, so far as its destruction could be compassed by the stupidity of a man. Pitt had made the name of England a power all over the civilised world. Rome at her greatest, Spain at her greatest, could hardly have surpassed the strength and the fame of England as Pitt had re-made it. George, from the very first, felt a sort of coldness towards his superb Minister. He had all the vague pervading jealousy which dulness naturally shows to genius. It was a displeasure to him from the first that Pitt should have made England so great, because the work was the inspiration of the subject and not of the Sovereign. No one can know for certain what thoughts were filling the mind of George as he rode to London that day in front of William Pitt. But it may fairly be assumed that he was not particularly sorry for the death of his grandfather, and that he was pleasing his spirit with the idea that he would soon emancipate himself from Mr. Pitt. "Be a King, George," his mother used to say to him. The unsifted youth was determined, if he could, to be a King.

At the time of his accession George was in his twenty-third year. He was a decidedly personable young Prince. He had the large regular features of his race, the warm complexion of good health, and a vigorous constitution, keen attractive eyes, and a firm, full mouth. He was

tall and strongly made, and carried himself with a carriage that was dignified or stiff according to the interpretation of those who observed it. Many of the courtly ladies thought him extremely handsome, were eagerly gracious to him, did their best to thrust themselves upon his attention, and received, it would seem, very little notice in return for their pains. If George showed himself indifferent and even ungallant to his enthusiastic admirers, his brother Edward was of a different disposition. But though Edward, like his brother, was an agreeable-looking youth, and keen to win favour in women's eyes, he found himself like Benedict; nobody marked him because he was not the heir to the throne.

In some illustrated histories of the reign two portraits of George the Third are placed in immediate and pathetic contrast. The one portrait represents George as he showed in the first year of his reign—alert, young, smiling, with short-cut powdered hair, a rich flowered coat, and the star and ribbon of the Garter on his breast. So might a young King look called in the flower of his age to the control of a great country, pleased, confident, and courageous. The other picture shows how the King looked in the sixtieth year of his reign. The face is old and wrinkled and weary; the straggling white locks escape from beneath a fur-trimmed cap; the bowed body is wrapped in a fur-trimmed robe. The time of two generations of men lay between the young King and the old; the longest reign then known to English history, the longest and the most eventful.

George the Third started with many advantages over his predecessors of the same name. He was an Englishman. He spoke the English language. It was his sincere wish to be above all things English. He honestly loved English ways. He had not the faintest desire to start a seraglio in England. He had no German mistresses. He did not care about fat women. He was devoted to his mother—perhaps a good deal too devoted, but even the excess of devotion might have been pardonable in the public opinion of England; certainly it was only his own weakness and perversity that made it for a while not pardonable. He was



of the country squire's order of mind ; his tastes were wholly those of the stolid, well-intentioned bucolic country squire. He would probably have been a very respectable and successful Sovereign if only he had not been plagued by the ambition to be a King.

It is curious to remember that the accession of George the Third was generally and joyfully welcomed. A hopeful people, having endured with increasing dislike two Sovereigns of the House of Hanover, were quite prepared to believe that a third prince was rich in all regal qualities, in all public and private virtues. It would, perhaps, have been unreasonable on the part of any dispassionate observer of public affairs to anticipate that a third George would make a worse monarch than his namesakes and immediate predecessors. The dispassionate observer might have maintained that there were limits to kingly misgovernment in a kingdom endowed with a Constitution and blessed with a measure of parliamentary representation, and that those limits had been fairly reached by the two German princes who ruled reluctantly enough over the fortunes of England. This same dispassionate observer might reasonably, assuming him to possess familiar knowledge of certain facts, have hazarded the prediction that George the Third would be a better King than his grandfather and his great-grandfather. He was certainly a better man. There was so much of a basis whereupon to build a hope of better things. The profligacy of his ancestors had not apparently vitiated his blood and judgment. His young life had been a pure life. He was in that way a pattern to princes. He had been, which was rare with his race, a good son. He was to be—and there was no more rare quality in one of his stock—a good husband, a good father. He was in his way a good friend to his friends. He was sincerely desirous to prove himself a good King to his people.

The youth of George the Third had passed under somewhat agitated conditions. George the Second's straightforward hatred for his son's wife opened a great gulf between the court and Leicester House, which no true courtier made any effort to bridge. While the young Prince knew, in consequence, little or nothing of the atmosphere of

St. James's or the temper of those who breathed that atmosphere, attempts were not wanting to sunder him from the influence of his mother. Some of the noblemen and clergymen to whom the early instruction of the young Prince was entrusted laboured with a persistency which would have been admirable in some other cause to sever him not merely from all his father's friends but even from his father's wife. There was indeed a time when their efforts almost succeeded in alienating the young Prince from his mother. The wildest charges of Jacobitism were brought against the immediate servants of the Princess, charges which those who made them wholly failed to substantiate. The endeavour to remove the Prince from the tutelage of his mother was abandoned. The education of the Prince was committed to more sympathetic care. The change had its advantage in keeping George in the wholesome atmosphere of Leicester House instead of exposing him to the temptations of a profligate court. It had its disadvantage in leaving him entirely under the influence of a man to whose guidance, counsel, and authority the Princess Dowager absolutely submitted herself.

Observers of the lighter sort are pleased to insist upon the trifles which have the most momentous influence upon the fortunes of peoples and the fates of empires. A famous and facile French playwright derived the downfall of a favourite and a political revolution from the spilling of a glass of water. There are times when the temptation to pursue this thread of fancy is very great. Suppose, for instance, it had not chanced to rain on a certain day at Clifden, when a cricket match was being played in which Frederick, Prince of Wales, happened to be interested. A fretted Prince would not have had to retire to his tent like Achilles, would not have insisted on a game of whist to cheer his humour. There would have been no difficulty in forming a rubber. There would have been no need to seek for a fourth hand. No wistful gentleman-in-attendance seeking the desirable would have had to ask the aid of a strange nobleman perched in an apothecary's chariot. Had this strange nobleman not been so sought and found, had the apothecary not been wealthy enough to keep a chariot,

and friendly enough to offer a poor Scotch gentleman a seat in it, it is possible that the American Colonies might yet form portion and parcel of the British Empire, that Chatham's splendid dreams might have become still more splendid realities, that the name of Wilkes might never have emerged from an obscurity of debauch to association with the name of Liberty. For the nobleman who made the fourth hand in the Prince of Wales's rubber was unfortunately a man of agreeable address and engaging manners, manners that pleased infinitely the Prince of Wales, and cemented a friendship most disastrous in its consequences to England, to the English people, and to an English King. The name of the engaging nobleman was Lord Bute.

At the time of this memorable game of whist Lord Bute was thirty-six years old. He was well educated, well read, tall of body, pleasing of countenance, quick in intelligence, and curious in disposition. These qualities won the heart of the Prince of Wales, and lifted the young Scotch nobleman from poverty and obscurity to prominence and favour. The Prince appointed Bute a Lord of the Bed-chamber and welcomed him to his most intimate friendship. The death of the Prince of Wales two years later had no disastrous effect upon the rising fortunes of the favourite. The influence which Bute had exercised over the mind of Frederick he exercised over the mind of Frederick's wife and over the mind of Frederick's heir. Scandal whispered, asserted, insisted then and has insisted ever since, that the influence which Lord Bute exercised over the Princess of Wales was not merely a mental influence. How far scandal was right or wrong there is no means, there probably never will be any means, of knowing. Lord Bute's defenders point to his conspicuous affection for his wife, Edward Wortley Montagu's only daughter, in contravention of the scandal. Undoubtedly Bute was a good husband and a good father. Whether the scandal was justified or not, the fact that it existed, that it was widely blown abroad and very generally believed, was enough. As far as the popularity of the Princess was concerned it might as well have been justified.



For years no caricature was so popular as that which displayed the Boot and the Petticoat, the ironic popular symbols of Lord Bute and the Princess.

By whatever means Lord Bute gained his influence over the Princess of Wales, he undoubtedly possessed the influence and used it with disastrous effect. He moulded the feeble intelligence of the young Prince George; he guided his thoughts, directed his studies in statecraft, and was to all intents and purposes the governor of the young Prince's person. The young Prince could hardly have had a worse adviser. Bute was a man of many merits, but his defects were in the highest degree dangerous in a person who had somehow become possessed of almost absolute power. In the obscurity of a private life, the man who had borne poverty with dignity at an age when poverty was peculiarly galling to one of his station might have earned the esteem of his immediate fellows. In the exaltation of a great if an unauthorised rule, and later in the authority of an important public office, his defects were fatal to his fame and to the fortunes of those who accepted his sway. For nearly ten years, from the death of Frederick, Prince of Wales, to the death of George the Second, Bute was all-powerful in his influence over the mother of the future King and over the future King himself. When the young Prince came to the throne Lord Bute did not immediately assume ostensible authority. He remained the confidential adviser of the young King until 1761. In 1761 he took office, assuming the Secretaryship of State resigned by Lord Holderness. From a secretaryship to the place of Prime Minister was but a step, and a step soon taken. Although he did not occupy office very long, he held it long enough to become perhaps the most unpopular Prime Minister England has ever had.

The youth of George the Third was starred with a strange romance. The full truth of the story of Hannah Lightfoot will probably never be known. What is known is sufficiently romantic without the additions of legend. Hannah Lightfoot was a beautiful Quaker girl, the daughter of a decent tradesman in Wapping. Association with the

family of an uncle, a linendraper, who lived near the court, brought the girl into the fashionable part of the town. The young Prince saw her by accident somehow, somewhere, in the early part of 1754, and fell in love with her. From that moment the girl disappears from certain knowledge, and legend busies itself with her name. It is asserted that she was actually married to the young Prince; that William Pitt, afterwards Earl of Chatham, was present at the marriage; that she bore the Prince several children. Other versions have it that she was married as a mere form to a man named Axford, who immediately left her, and that after this marriage she lived with the Prince. She is supposed to have died in a secluded villa in Hackney. It is said that not only the wife of George the Third but the wife of George the Fourth believed that the marriage had taken place. We must not attach too much importance to a story which in itself is so very unlikely. It is in the last degree improbable that a statesman like Pitt would have lent himself to so singular a proceeding. Even if an enamoured young Prince were prepared to sanction his affections by a marriage, he would scarcely have found an assistant in the ablest politician of the age. The story of the Axford marriage is far more probable. If Hannah Lightfoot had been married to George she would have been Queen of England, for there was no Royal Marriage Act in those days.

Another and more famous romance is associated with the youth of George the Third. Lady Sarah Lennox, the youngest daughter of the second Duke of Richmond, was one of the most beautiful women of her time. The writers of the day rave about her, describe her as "an angel," as lovelier than any Magdalen by Correggio. When she was only seventeen years old her beauty attracted the young King, who soon made no secret of his devotion to her. The new passion divided the court into two camps. The House of Lennox was eager to bring about a marriage, which was not then obstructed by the law. Henry Fox, one of the most ambitious men of that time or of any time, was Lady Sarah's brother-in-law, and he did his best to promote the marriage. On the other hand, the party which

followed the lead of the Princess Dowager and Lord Bute fought uncompromisingly against the scheme. The Princess Dowager had everything to lose, Lord Bute had everything to lose, by such an alliance. The power of the Princess Dowager over the young King would vanish, and the influence of Lord Bute over the Princess Dowager would cease to have any political importance. Lord Bute did all he could to keep the lovers apart. Henry Fox did all he could to bring the lovers together. For lovers they undoubtedly were. George again and again made it plain to those who were in his confidence that he was in love with Lady Sarah, and was anxious to make her his Queen; and Lady Sarah, though her heart is said to have been given to Lord Newbottle, was quite ready to yield to the wishes of her family when those wishes were for the crown of England. On the meadows of Holland House the beautiful girl, loveliest of Arcadian rustics, would play at making hay till her royal lover came riding by to greet her.

But the idyll did not end in the marriage for which Fox and the Lennoxes hoped. It is said that the King was jealous of Lord Newbottle; it is said that a sense of duty to his place and to his people made him resolve to subdue and sacrifice his own personal feelings. He offered his hand and his crown to the Princess of Mecklenburg-Strelitz. Lady Sarah lost both her lovers, the King and Lord Newbottle, who, in the words of Grenville, "complained as much of her as she did of the King." But she did not remain long unmarried. In 1762 she accepted as husband the famous sporting Baronet Sir Thomas Charles Bunbury, and nineteen years later she married the Hon. George Napier, and became the mother of an illustrious pair of soldier brothers, Sir Charles Napier, the hero of Scinde, and Sir William Napier, perhaps the best military historian since Julius Cæsar. Lady Sarah died in 1826 in her eighty-second year. In her later years she had become totally blind, and she bore her affliction with a sweet patience. At her death she is described by the chroniclers of the time as "probably the last surviving great-granddaughter of King Charles the Second." A barren honour, surely.



The young Princess whom George married was in many ways well and even excellently qualified to make a good Queen. It is said that she was discovered for her young husband after a fashion something resembling a tale from the "Arabian Nights." The Princess Dowager, eager to counteract the fatal effect of the beauty of Lady Sarah Lennox, was anxious to have the young King married as soon as possible. Her own wishes were in favour of a daughter of the House of Saxe-Gotha, but it is said that fear of a disease hereditary in the family overruled her wishes. Then, according to the story, a Colonel Graeme, a Scotch gentleman upon whose taste Lord Bute placed great reliance, was sent on a kind of roving embassy to the various little German courts in search of the ideal bride. The lady of the quest was, according to the instructions given to Colonel Graeme, to be at once beautiful, healthy, accomplished, of mild disposition, and versed in music, an art to which the King was much devoted. Colonel Graeme, with this pleasing picture of feminine graces ever in his mind, found the original of the portrait in Charlotte Sophia, the second daughter of Charles Lewis Frederick, Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz.

There is another version of the manner of George's wooing which nullifies the story of Colonel Graeme's romantic mission. According to this other version George fell in love with his future Queen simply from reading a letter written by her. The tale sounds as romantic as that of the Provençal poet's passion for the portrait of the Lady of Tripoli. It is true, however, that the letter of Charlotte Sophia was something of the nature of a state paper. The Duchy of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, of which the Princess Charlotte's brother was the Sovereign, had been overrun by the troops of the King of Prussia. The young Princess wrote a letter to the Prussian King, which came to George's notice and inspired him, it is said, with the liveliest admiration for the lady who penned it. Whatever the actual reason, whether the report of Colonel Graeme or the charms of her epistolary style, the certain thing is that George was married, first by proxy and afterwards in due form, to the young Princess in 1761. The young Princess

was not remarkably beautiful. Even the courtiers of the day, anxious to say their strongest in her praise, could not do much more than commend her eyes and complexion and call her "a very fine girl," while those who were not inclined to flatter said her face was all mouth, and declared, probably untruly, that the young King was at first obviously repelled by the plainness of his wife's appearance. If she was plain, her plainness, as Northcote, the painter said, was an elegant, not a vulgar plainness, and the grace of her carriage much impressed him. Walpole found her sensible, cheerful, and remarkably genteel, a not inconsiderable eulogy from him. She was fairly educated, as the education of princesses went in those days. She knew French and Italian, knew even a little English. She had various elegant accomplishments—could draw, and dance, and play, had acquired a certain measure of scientific knowledge, and she had what was better than all these attainments, a good, kindly, sensible nature. The marriage could hardly be called a popular marriage at first. Statesmen and politicians thought that the King of England ought to have found some more illustrious consort than the daughter of a poor and petty German House. The people at large, we are told from a private letter of the time, were "quite exasperated at her not being handsome," beauty in a sovereign being a great attraction to the mass of subjects. The courtiers in general were amused by, and secretly laughed at, her simple ways and old-fashioned—or at least un-English—manners.

After the wedding came the coronation, a very resplendent ceremony, which was not free from certain somewhat ludicrous features, and was not denied a certain tragic dignity. It was enormously expensive. Horace Walpole called it a puppet-show that cost a million. Loyal London turned out in its thousands. Surprisingly large sums of money were paid for rooms and scaffolds from which the outdoor sight could be seen, and much larger were paid for places inside the Abbey. It was very gorgeous, very long, and very fatiguing. The spectator carried away, with aching senses, a confused memory of many soldiers, of great peers ill at ease in unbecoming habits, of beautiful women beauti-

fully attired, of a blaze of jewels that recalled the story of Aladdin's mine, and of the wonderful effect by which the darkness of Westminster Hall was suddenly illuminated by an ingenious arrangement of sconces that caught fire and carried on the message of light with great rapidity. The heralds in whose hands the ceremonial arrangements lay bungled their business badly, causing fierce heart-burnings by confusions in precedence, and displaying a lamentable ignorance of the names and the whereabouts of many wearers of stately and ancient titles. When the King expressed his annoyance at some of the blunders, Lord Effingham, the Earl Marshal, offered, for amazing apology, the assurance that the next coronation would be conducted with perfect order, an unfortunate speech, which had, however, the effect of affording the King infinite entertainment. The one tragic touch in the whole day's work may be legend, but it is legend that might be and that should be truth. When Dymoke, the King's Champion, rode, in accordance with the antique usage, along Westminster Hall, and flung his glove down in challenge to any one who dared contest his master's right to the throne of England, it is said that some one darted out from the crowd, picked up the glove, slipped back into the press and disappeared, without being stopped or discovered. According to one version of the incident, it was a woman who did the deed; according to another it was Charles Edward himself, the Young Pretender—now no longer so very young—who made this last protest on behalf of his lost fortunes and his fallen House. It is possible, it is even probable, that Charles Edward was in London then and thereafter, and it seems certain that if he was in London King George knew of it and ignored it in a chivalrous and kingly way. The Young Pretender could do no harm now. Stuart hopes had burned high for a moment, fifteen years earlier, when a handsome young Prince carried his invading flag halfway through England, and a King who was neither handsome nor young was ready to take ship from Tower Stairs if worse came of it. But those hopes were quenched now, down in the dust, extinguished for ever. No harm could come to the House of Hanover, no harm could come to the King of England,



if at Lady Primrose's house in St. James's Square a party should be interrupted by the entrance of an unexpected guest, of a man prematurely aged by dissipation and disappointment, a melancholy ruin of what had once been fair and noble, and in whom his amazed and reverent hostess recognised the last of the fated Stuarts. There were spies amongst those who still professed adherence to Charles Edward and allegiance to his line, spies bearing names honourable in Scottish history, who were always ready to keep George and George's Ministers posted in the movements of the unhappy Prince they betrayed. George could afford to be magnanimous, and George was magnanimous. If it pleased the poor Pretender to visit, like a premature ghost, the city and the scenes associated with his House and its splendour and its awful tragedies, he did so untroubled and unharmed. It was but a cast of the dice in Fortune's fingers, and Charles Edward would have been in Westminster Hall and had a champion to assert his right. But the cast of the dice went the other way, and George the Third was King, and his little German Princess was Queen of England.

It is probable that those early days in London were the happiest in the little Queen's long life. She had come from exceeding quiet to a great and famous city; she was the centre of splendour; she was surrounded by splendid figures; she was the first lady of a great land; she was the Queen of a great King; she was the fortunate wife of a loyal, honourable, and pure-minded man. She was young, she was frank, she was fond of all innocent pleasures, keenly alive to all the entertainment that court and capital could offer her. She crammed more gaieties into the first few days of her marriage than she had dreamed of in all her previous life. The girl who had never seen the sea until she took ship for England, had never seen a play acted until she came to London. Mecklenburg-Strelitz had its own strong ideas about the folly and frivolity of the stage, and no Puritan maiden in the sternest days of Cromwellian ascendancy, no Calvinist daughter of the most rigorous Scottish household, could have been educated in a more austere ignorance of the arts that are supposed to embellish

and that are intended to amuse existence. She went to playhouse after playhouse, alarmed at the crowds that thronged the streets to see her, but fascinated by the delights that awaited her within the walls. She attended the opera. She saw "The Beggar's Opera," which may have charmed her for its story without perplexing her by its satire. She saw "The Rehearsal," and did not dream that twenty years later the humours of Bayes, which she probably did not understand, would be eclipsed for ever by the fantasies of Mr. Puff. She carried the King to Ranelagh, to that amazing, enchanting assembly where all the world made masquerade, and mandarins, harlequins, shepherdesses, and much translated pagan divinities jostled each other through Armida's gardens, where the pink of fashion and the plain citizen, the patrician lady and the plebeian waiting-maid made merry together in a motley rout of Comus, and marvelled at the brilliancy of the illuminations and the many-coloured glories of the fireworks.

The London to which the little Princess came, and which she found so full of entertainment, was a very different London from the city for which the first of the Georges had quitted reluctantly the pleasures of Hanover and the gardens of Herrenhausen. The Hanoverian princes had never tried, as the Stuart sovereigns had tried, to stop by peremptory legislation the spread of the metropolis. London had been steadily spreading in the half-century of Guelf dominion, eating up the green fields in all directions, linking itself with little lonely hamlets and tiny rustic villages, and weaving them close into the web of its being, choking up rural streams and blotting out groves and meadows with monuments of brick and mortar. Where the friends of George the First could have hunted and gunned and found refreshment in secluded country alehouses, the friends of George the Third were familiar with miles of stony streets and areas of arid squares. London was not then the monster city that another century and a half has made it, but it was even more huge in its proportion to the size of any of its rivals, if rivals they could be called, among the large towns of England. The great city did not deserve the adjective that is applied to it by the poet of Chevy Chase. London

was by no means lovely. However much it might have increased in size, it had increased very little in beauty, and not at all in comfort, since the days when an Elector of Hanover became King of England. It still compared only to its disadvantage with the centres of civilisation on the Continent; it still was rich in all the dangers and all the discomforts Gay had celebrated nearly two generations earlier. And these dangers and discomforts were not confined to London. The world beyond London was a world of growing provincial towns and increasing seaports connected by tolerable and sometimes admirable highways, and of smaller towns and villages reduced for the most part to an almost complete isolation by roads that were always nearly and often quite impassable. To travel much in England in those days was scarcely less adventurous even for an Englishman than to travel in Africa to-day; for a foreigner the adventure was indeed environed by perils.

Dress and manners had changed in the Hanoverian half-century, though not as much as they were to change in the fifty years that were still in futurity. Extravagance of attire still persisted, though the extravagance had changed its expression. The gigantic hoops in which ladies had delighted had diminished, had dwindled, and gowns were of a slender seemliness. But reformed below, fantasy rioted above. The headdresses of women in the early days of the third George were as monstrous, as horrible, and as shapeless in their way as the hideous hoops had been in theirs. Vast pyramids of false hair were piled on the heads of fashionable ladies, were pasted together with pomatums, were smothered in powder and pricked with feathers like the headgear of a savage. Those odious erections took so long to build up that they were suffered to remain in their ugly entirety not for days but for weeks together, until the vast structure became a decomposing mass. It is rather ghastly to remember that youth and beauty and grace allowed itself to be so loathsomely adorned, that the radiant women whose faces smile from the canvases of great painters, and whose names illuminate the chronicles of the wasted time of the reign of George the Third, were condemned to dwell



with corruption in consenting to be caricatured. Till far on in the lifetime of Queen Charlotte the fashion in women's wear oscillated from one extreme to another, the gracious of to-day becoming the grotesque of yesterday, and mode succeeding mode with the confusion and fascination of a masquerade.

The men were no less remarkable than the women for the clothes they wore, no less capricious in their changes. A decided, if not a conspicuous, turn of public taste had done much since the accession of the first George to minimise if not to obliterate the differences between class and class. Men no longer consented readily to carry the badge of their calling in their daily costume, and the great world came gradually to be no longer divided sharply from the little world by marked distinction of dress. But still, and for long after 1760, the clothes of men were scarcely less brilliant, scarcely less importunate in their demands upon the attention of their wearers, than the clothes of women. Men made a brave show in those days. A group of men might be as strong in colour and as vivid in contrast as a group of women; the neutralisation of tone, the degradation of hue, did not begin till much later, and only conquered in the cataclysm of the birth throes of two republics. Blue and scarlet, green and yellow, crimson and purple, orange and plum-colour were the daily wear of the well-to-do; and even for the less wealthy there were the warm browns and murreys, the bottle-greens and clarets, and lavenders and buffs which made any crowd a thing to please a painter in the eighteenth century. In all the varying breeds of beaux and macaronis and dandies, of bucks and fribbles, into which the fine gentlemen of the age allowed themselves to be classified, the one dominant feature, the one common characteristic, was the love for gold and silver and fine laces, for gaudiness of colour and richness of ornament, for every kind of exquisite extravagance, every refinement in foppishness. There was a passion for the punctilio of dress, for the grace of a gold-headed cane and a chased sword-hilt, for the right ribbon, the right jewel, the right flower, and the right perfume, for the right powder in the hair and the right seals on the fob

and the right heels and buckles on the shoes. There was an ardent appreciation, an uncompromising worship of the fine feathers that make fine birds.

The social system of the polite world had been slowly changing with the successive Georges. The familiar events in the lives of the well-to-do classes were growing steadily later. The dinner hour, which was generally at noon or one in the reign of Queen Anne, had crept on to three o'clock under the first, and to four o'clock under the second George. Under the third it was to grow later and later, until it made Horace Walpole rage as if the world were coming to an end because amongst fashionable folk it had settled itself at six o'clock. In the country, indeed, for the most part people lived the quiet lives and kept the early hours of Sir Roger de Coverley. But however London lived and whatever London chose to do, England's simple honest King and England's simple honest Queen would have no concern with the follies of fashion and the luxuries of late hours. However much the rashness and wrong-headedness of his public policy forced him to accept the services and prime the pockets of a gang of drunkards and debauchees who called themselves and were called the King's friends, the evil communications had not the slightest influence upon the royal good manners, and did not alter by one jot the rigid frugality of George's life and that of his royal consort. The King's friends were only the King's jackals; they never were suffered for a moment to cross the line which severed the Sovereign's private life from his public actions. Indeed, it may be assumed that few of the hard-drinking, hard-living, gambling, raking ruffians who battered on the King's bounty, and who voted white black and good bad with uncompromising pertinacity and unappeasable relish, would have welcomed the hard seats at the royal table, the meagre fare on the royal platters, the homely countrified air the royal couple breathed, and the homely countrified hour at which the royal couple took up their candles and went to bed. George the Third would be long asleep at an hour when his friends would be thinking of paying a visit to Ranelagh, or preparing to spend a

pleasant evening over their cards, their dice-box, and their wine.

Especially their wine. The one great characteristic of the gentility of the day was its capacity for drinking wine. "Wine, dear child, and truth," says a Greek poet, naming the two most admirable gifts of life. Truth was not always very highly prized by the men who set manners and made history in the second half of the eighteenth century, but to wine they clung with an absolutely unswerving and unalterable attachment. If the great Oriental scholar who adorned the age had been more fortunate in his studies, if Sir William Jones had chanced to make acquaintance with a Persian poet who has since become very famous among Englishmen, he would have found in the quatrains of Omar Khayyam the very verses to please the minds and to interpret the desires of the majority of the statesmen, soldiers, divines, lawyers, and fine gentlemen of the day. It is as impossible to imagine the men of the eighteenth century without their incessant libations of wine as it is impossible to imagine what the eighteenth century would have been like if it had been for the most part abstemious, sober, or even reasonably temperate. As we read the memoirs of the day, and if we believe only a part of what they tell us, making the most liberal allowance for the exaggeration of the wit and the satire of the cynic, we have to picture the political and social life of the time as a drunken orgy. Undoubtedly there were then, as always, men of decent behaviour and discreet life, men who would no more have exceeded in wine than in any other way. But the temper of the age and the tone of the fashionable world was not in tune with their austerity. Wonder at the frequency with which men of position got drunk then is only rivalled by wonder at the amount which they could drink without getting drunk.

The cry of the Persian nightingale to the Persian rose, "Wine, wine, wine," was the cry to which hearts responded most readily in all the Georgian era. Walpole the father made Walpole the son drink too much, that he might not be unfilially sober while his father was unpaternally drunk. A generation later the younger Pitt plied himself with port



as a medicine for the gout. The statesmen of the period, in the words of Sir George Trevelyan, sailed on a sea of claret from one comfortable official haven to another. The amount of liquor consumed by each man at a convivial gathering was Gargantuan, prodigious, hardly to be credited. Thackeray tells, in some recently published notes for his lectures on the Four Georges, of a Scotch judge who was forced to drink water for two months, and being asked what was the effect of the *régime*, owned that he saw the world really as it was for the first time for twenty years. For a quarter of a century he had never been quite sober. This man might be taken as a type of the *bons vivants*, the *buveurs très illustres* of the eighteenth century. They were never quite sober all through their lives. They never saw the world as it really was. They pleaded, preached, debated, fought, gambled, loved, and hated under the influence of their favourite vintage, saw all things through a vinous fume, and judged all things with inflamed pulses and a reeling brain. But it must not be forgotten that the population of the country was not entirely composed of corrupt hard-drinking politicians, profligate hard-drinking noblemen, and furious hard-drinking country gentlemen. If these were, in a sense, the more conspicuous types, there were other types very different and very admirable. Apart from the great mass of the people, living their dull daily lives, doing their dull daily tasks, quiet, ignorant, unconscious that they could or should ever have any say in the disposition of their existences, there were both in town and country plenty of decent, sober, honourable, and upright men and women who had nothing in common with the fine gentlemen and the fine ladies who fill the historical fashion plates. If, unfortunately, Squire Western and Parson Truliber were true pictures, at least Parson Adam and Sir Roger de Coverley still held good. None the less a young, self-willed King, not too intelligent and not too well educated, could scarcely have come to his sovereignty at a time less like to be fruitful of good for him or for the country that he was resolved to govern.

## CHAPTER XLIII

## GEORGE AND THE DRAGONS

THE King was not lucky in his first act of sovereignty. In his speech at the opening of Parliament on November 18, 1760, he used a form of words which he, and some of those who advised him, evidently believed to be eminently calculated to advance his popularity. "Born and educated in this country, I glory in the name of Briton," the King said; and the words would seem to suggest such an intimacy of association between the King and the kingdom as must needs knit the hearts of ruler and of ruled more closely together. Yet the choice of words gave offence in certain quarters, and for two quite distinct reasons. Many of the adherents and admirers of the late King—for even George the Second had his admirers—were indignant at the contrast which the new King seemed deliberately to draw between himself and his grandfather. In accentuating the fact that he was born and bred in England, George the Third appeared by imputation to be casting a slur upon the German nature and German prejudices of George the Second. This boast, however much it might offend the feelings of the friends of the late King, was not at all calculated to affect the mass of the public, who had little love for George the Second, and whose affection for the new King was based mainly on the hope and the assumption that he would prove to be as unlike the old King as possible. But there was another interpretation to be put upon the royal words which was likely to cause a wider impression and a wider hostility. It would seem that some of the King's advisers wished him to write that he gloried in the name of Englishman, it would even seem that the King had actually used this word in the written draft of his speech. Lord Bute, it was said, had struck out the word "Englishman," and had induced the King to accept the word "Briton" as a substitute. The difference would not be quite without moment now: it appeared

very momentous to many then, who read in the word chosen a most convincing proof of the Scotch influence behind the throne. The King's pride in styling himself a Briton was taken to be, what indeed it was, evidence of his affection for the Scotch peer who had been so lately sworn into his Privy Council; and the alarm and indignation of all who resented the Scotch influence was very great. The Duke of Newcastle in especial was irritated by the use of the word "Briton," and the evidence it forced upon him of his own waning influence and the waxing power of Bute. He even went so far as to wish that some notice should be taken of the "royal words" both in the motion and the address; but in the end he and those who thought with him felt that they must submit and stifle their anger for the time, and so the King, unchallenged, proclaimed himself a Briton.

Whatever else George had learned in the days of his tutelage, he had learned to form an ideal of what a king should be and a determination to realise that ideal in his own rule. The old idea of the personal authority of the Sovereign seemed to be passing away, to be dropping out of the whole scheme and system of the English Constitution along with the belief in the theory of the divine right of kings. The new King, however, was resolved to prove that he was the head of the State in fact as well as in name; that with his own hands he would restore to himself the power and authority which his grandfather and his great-grandfather had allowed unwisely to slip through their fingers. The difficulties in the way of such an enterprise might very well have disheartened any being less headstrong, any spirit less stubborn. There were forces opposed to him that seemed to overmatch his puny purpose as much as the giants overmatched the pigmy hero of the nursery tale. St. George in the chivalrous legend had but one dragon to destroy; the young royal St. George set himself with a light heart to attack a whole brood of dragons—the dragons of the great Whig party.

When George the Third came to the throne the government of the country was entirely in the hands of the Whigs. The famous stately Whig Houses, the Houses of Caven-



dish, of Russell, of Temple, of Bentinck, of Manners, of Fitzroy, of Lennox, of Conway, of Pelham, of Wentworth, were as little subservient to the Sovereign as the great Frankish nobles who stood about the throne of the Do-nothing kings. The Tory party was politically almost non-existent. No Tory filled any office, great or little, that was at the disposal of the Whigs, and the Whigs had retained their ascendancy for well-nigh half a century. Jacobitism had been the ruin of the Tory cause. All Tories were not Jacobites, but, roughly speaking, all Jacobites were Tories, and there were still, even at the date of George's accession, stout-hearted, thick-headed Tory gentlemen who believed in or vaguely hoped for a possible restoration of a Stuart prince. It is curious to find that, though the Whig ranks stood fast in defence of the House of Hanover, had made that House, and owed their ascendancy to their loyalty to that House, the latest Hanoverian Sovereign not only disliked them, but dealt them blow after blow until he overthrew their rule. The Tories, who sighed for a Stuart prince over the water, suddenly found to their astonishment that they had a friend in the Hanoverian Guelf, whose name they hated, whose right to the throne they challenged, and whose authority they derided, when they dared not despise.

It cannot be denied that the Whigs had often abused, and more than abused, the privileges which their long lease of power had given to them. All political parties ruled by corruption during the last century. The Whig was not more corrupt than the Tory, but it can hardly be maintained that he was less corrupt. The great Whig Houses bought their way to power with resolute unscrupulousness. A majority in either House was simply a case of so much money down. The genius of Walpole had secured his own pre-eminence at the cost of the almost total degradation of the whole administrative system of the country. When George the Third came to the throne the Whigs were firmly established in a powerful league of bigotry and intolerance, cemented by corruption, by bribery, by purchase of the most uncompromising, of the basest kind. George the Third had fostered through youthful

years of silence those strong ideas of his own about the importance of the kingly office which he was now to proclaim by his deeds. In the way of those strong ideas, in the way of the steadfast determination to be King in fact as well as in name, stood the great Whig faction, flushed with its more than forty years' debauch of power, insolent in the sense of its own omnipotence. George was resolute to show that the claim to omnipotence was a sham, and, to do him justice, he succeeded in his resolve.

At the head of the Whig party in the House of Lords was the Duke of Newcastle. At its head in the House of Commons was William Pitt. These two Ministers seemed fixed and irremovable in their supreme authority. While Newcastle lavished the money of the State in that spacious system of bribery which welded the party into so formidable a mass, it was the proud privilege of Pitt to illuminate its policy by his splendid eloquence at home and by the splendour of his enterprises abroad. Both the Ministers were an enormous expense to the country. Newcastle never counted the cost so long as there was a county member to be bought or a placeman to be satisfied. Pitt never counted the cost so long as he could add another trophy of victory to the walls of Westminster Abbey and inscribe another triumph on England's roll of battles. The sordid skill of Newcastle and the dazzling genius of Pitt seemed between them to make the Whig party invulnerable and irresistible. There was no opposition in Upper or Lower House; there had been for many years no hint of royal opposition. Everything promised a long continuance of the undisputed Whig sway when suddenly the secret determination of a young King and the secret instigations of a Scotch peer dissipated the stately fabric that had endured so long.

The fixed purpose of Lord Bute was to get rid of Pitt. The fixed purpose of Lord Bute created the fixed purpose of the King, and the hours of Pitt's Administration were numbered. After a season of rare glory, of resplendent triumph, Pitt found himself face to face with a formidable coalition of interests against him, a coalition of interests none the less formidable because it was headed by a man

for whose attainments, opinions, and ability Pitt must have felt, and scarcely concealed, the greatest contempt. Pitt had not made himself an object of personal affection to those with whom he was brought into immediate contact. In the time of his supremacy he had carried himself with a haughty arrogance, with an austere disdain which had set the smaller men about him raging in secret antagonism. The King, driven on by his own dreams of personal authority, disliked the great Minister. Bute, drunk with the wild ambitions of a weak man, seems to have believed that in succeeding to Pitt's place he could also succeed to Pitt's genius. Pitt soon became aware of the strength of the cabal against him. While some of his colleagues were disaffected, others were almost openly treacherous. Bute's manner waxed more arrogant in Council. The King's demeanour grew daily colder. The great question of war or peace was the question that divided the Cabinet. On a question of war or peace Bute triumphed and Pitt fell.

Pitt was all for carrying on the war, which had thus far proved so successful for the British flag. But Pitt was not powerfully supported in his belief. If he had his brothers-in-law James Grenville and Lord Temple on his side, he had ranged against him a powerful opposition formed by Henry Fox and George Grenville, by Lord Hardwicke and the Duke of Bedford. On the side of the peace party Bute ranged himself, bringing with him all the enormous weight that his influence with the King gave him. The case of the peace party was a simple, straightforward case. Why, they asked, should we continue to fight? Our sweet enemy France is on her knees and ready to accept our terms. Let us enforce those terms and make a triumphant peace instead of further bleeding our exhausted treasury in the prosecution of a war from which we have now nothing more to gain. Chance gave the peace party their opportunity. Pitt had become cognisant of the treaty between France and Spain known as the "Family Compact," the secret treaty which we have already fully described, by which the two Bourbon princes agreed to make common cause against England. Pitt straightway proposed that the hostile purposes of Spain should be anticipated by an



immediate declaration of war against Spain and the immediate despatch of a fleet to Cadiz. Bute promptly opposed the proposal in the Cabinet, and carried the majority of the Council with him in his opposition. Pitt instantly resigned.

A curious thing had happened at the coronation ceremony. One of the largest jewels in the royal crown got loose and fell from its place. This was looked upon at the time by superstitious people as a sinister omen. These now saw the fulfilment of their forebodings in the loss to the State of the services of the great Minister. The King himself had no sense that his regal glory was dimmed in its lustre by the resignation of Pitt. He was so delighted at having got rid thus easily of the great obstacle to his own authority that he could readily consent to lend to the act of parting a gracious air of regret. Much was done to lighten Pitt's fall. Very liberal offers were made by the King, offers which seemed to many to mask a hope, and more than a hope, of undermining the popularity of the great leader. Pitt declined several offers that were personal to himself, but expressed his readiness to accept some signs of the royal favour on behalf of his wife and his family. A barony was conferred upon Pitt's wife and a pension of three thousand a year upon Pitt for three lives. There was nothing unworthy in Pitt's action. He was notoriously poor; he was no less notoriously honest; it was perfectly certain that, in an age when a successful politician was for the most part a speculator, no shilling of public money had ever stuck to Pitt's fingers. If he was instantly attacked by libels and pamphlets that were probably paid for by Bute, or that at least were inspired by a desire to please Bute, the attacks did Pitt more good than harm. They produced a prompt reaction, and only had the effect of making Pitt more dear to the people than before. His pictures had an enormous sale, and his partisans on the press poured out caricatures and lampoons upon Bute and his Scotchmen in greater volume and with greater violence than ever.

Bute was not content with the overthrow of Pitt. He wished to stand in isolated splendour, and to accomplish

this Newcastle too must go. The great briber of yesterday had to give way to the great briber of to-day, and Bute stood alone before the world, the head of the King's Ministry, the favourite of the King, the champion of a policy that promised peace abroad and purity at home, and that resulted in a renewal of war under conditions of peculiar disadvantage and a renewed employment of the basest forms of political corruption. Bute had gained the power he longed for, but Bute was soon to learn that power need not and did not mean popularity. "The new Administration begins tempestuously," Walpole wrote on June 20, 1762. "My father was not more abused after twenty years than Lord Bute is after twenty days. Weekly papers swarm, and, like other swarms of insects, sting." Bute affected an indifference to this unpopularity which he did not really feel. It is not flattering to a statesman's pride to be unable to go abroad without being hissed and pelted by the mob, and it is hard for a Minister to convince himself of the admiration of a nation when a strong body-guard is necessary to secure him from the constant danger of personal attacks. Bute's character did not refine under the tests imposed upon it. His objectionable qualities grew more and more marked in proportion as he grew more and more unpopular. The less he was liked the less he deserved to be liked. Adversity did not magnify that small soul. In his mean anger he sought for mean revenge. Every person who owed an appointment to the former Ministry felt the weight of the favourite's wrath. Dismissal from office was the order of the day, and Whig after Whig was forced to leave his place or office open for some Tory who was ready to express an enthusiasm for the statesmanship of Bute.

Bute's idea of a foreign policy was to reverse the policy of Pitt. He abandoned Frederick of Prussia to his enemies by cutting off the subsidy which Pitt had paid him, on the ground that the time agreed on for the subsidy was up, and that as England only granted it for her own purposes, and not to benefit Frederick, she was justified in discontinuing it whenever it suited her. Only a chance saved the Great Frederick from what seemed like inevit-

able ruin. The Czarina, Elizabeth of Russia, died, and was succeeded by Peter the Third. With the change of Sovereign came a change in the purposes of Russia. The Russian army, which had fought with Austria against Frederick, now received orders to fight with Frederick against Austria. The war with Spain that Pitt had predicted Bute was obliged to wage. The conduct of Spain made it impossible for him not to declare war, and, aided by Pitt's preparations, he was able to carry on the war with considerable success. But the credit for such success was generally given to Pitt, and when Bute made peace with Spain and France it was generally felt that the terms were not such as Pitt would have exacted after so long and splendid a succession of victories. There was, indeed, a good deal to be said for the peace, but at the time those who tried to say it did not get a very patient hearing. It was well that the long Continental war was ended. Few of those engaged in it had gained much by it. Prussia, indeed, though it left her well-nigh bankrupt and almost ruined by the enormous burdens she had sustained, was better in position. She came out of the struggle without the loss of a single acre of territory, and with what Frederick especially coveted, the rank of a first-rate Power in Europe. If Prussia, which had been so long England's ally, had gained, England had not lost. Undoubtedly Pitt's war was popular; no less undoubtedly Bute's peace was unpopular, and the unpopularity of the policy intensified the unpopularity of the Minister. In the eyes of the bulk of the English people Lord Bute, as a Scotchman, was a foreigner, as much a foreigner as if he hailed from France or the Low Countries. Lord Chesterfield was finely disdainful of the popular opposition to Bute on account of his nationality. "If the vulgar are ever right," he said, "they are right for the wrong reason. What they selected to attack in Lord Bute was his being a Scotchman, which was precisely what he could not help." But it was not Bute's nationality, so much as his flagrant partiality to his fellow-countrymen, that made him unpopular. His affection for his own countrymen, however admirable and even touching in itself, was resented fiercely by the English



people, who found themselves threatened by a new invasion of the Picts and Scots. Across the Border came a steady stream of Bute's henchmen, men with names that seemed outlandish and even savage to the Londoner, and every Scotchman found, or hoped to find, through the influence of Bute, his way to office and emolument. The growing hatred for Bute extended itself as rapidly as unjustly to the nation from which Bute came.

The story of Bute's Ministry is a story of astonishing mistakes. The Tories, who for five-and-forty years had inveighed against the political corruption which, fostered by Walpole, seemed to have culminated under Newcastle, now boldly went in for a system of flagrant bribery which surpassed anything yet essayed by the most cynical of Whig Ministers. The Paymaster's Office became a regular mart where parliamentary votes were bought and sold as unblushingly as humbler folk bought and sold groceries across a counter. A Ministry weakened by an unpopular peace, and only held together by such cynical merchandise, was not likely to withstand a strong storm, and the storm was not long in rising.

To swell the Exchequer the Ministry proposed to raise revenue by a tax on cider and perry. It was resolved to levy an imposition of four shillings per hogshead on the grower of the apple wine and the pear wine. The cider counties raised a clamour of indignation that found a ready echo in London. Pitt, Beckford, Lyttelton, Hardwicke, Temple, all spoke against the proposed measure and denounced its injustice. George Grenville defended the Bill.

Grenville was one of those honourable and upright statesmen who do not contrive to make either honour or rectitude seem lovable qualities. He had first made himself conspicuous as one of the Boy Patriots who rallied with Pitt against Walpole. His abilities ran with swiftness along few and narrow channels. He was desperately well informed about many things, and desperately in earnest about anything which he undertook. Blessed or cursed with a solemnity that never was enlivened by a gleam of humour, a ray of fancy, or a flash of eloquence, Grenville

regarded the House of Commons with the cold ferocity of a tyrannical and pompous schoolmaster. A style of speech that would have made a discourse upon Greek poetry seem arid and a dissertation upon Italian painting colourless—if it were possible to conceive Grenville as wasting time or thought on such trifles—added no grace to the exposition of a fiscal measure or charm to the formality of a phalanx of figures. He was gloomy, dogged, domineering, and small-minded. His nearest approach to a high passion was his worship of economy; his nearest approach to a splendid virtue was his stubborn independence. He abandoned Pitt for Bute because he detested Pitt's prodigal policy, but Bute was the more deceived if he fancied that he was to find in Grenville the convenient mask that he had lost in Newcastle; and the King himself had yet to learn how indifferent the dry, morose pedant and preacher could be not merely to royal favour, but even to the expression of royal opinion. It was truly said of him by the greatest of his contemporaries that he seemed to have no delight out of the House except in such things as in some way related to the business that was to be done within it. The "undissipated and unwearied application" which he devoted to everything that he undertook was now employed in exasperating the country. The time was not yet ripe for it to be employed in dismembering the empire.

In his support of the cider tax Grenville managed to make it and himself ridiculous at the same time. In his defence he kept asking, over and over again, "Where will you find another tax? tell me where." Pitt, who was listening disdainfully to his arguments, followed one of these persistent interrogations by softly half singing to himself, very audibly, the words which belonged to a popular song, "Gentle shepherd, tell me where." The House took the hint with delight, and the title of Gentle Shepherd remained an ironical adornment of Grenville for the rest of his life.

Bute's disregard of public opinion was contrasted to his disadvantage with the conduct of Sir Robert Walpole, who bowed to the demonstration against his far wiser system of

excise. Bute forced his tax forward in defiance of the popular feeling, and then, apparently alarmed by the strength of the spirit he had himself raised, he answered the general indignation by a sudden and welcome resignation on April 8, 1763. This was the end of Bute's attempt to be the recognised head of a Government, though he still hoped and believed that he could rule from behind the throne instead of standing conspicuously at its side. To his unpopularity as a foreigner, to his unpopularity as a favourite, public hostility added a fresh, if a far-fetched and fantastic, reason for detesting Bute. It was pointed out that he had Stuart blood in his veins, that an ancestor of his had been the brother of a Scottish king. Any stick is good enough to strike an unpopular statesman with, and there were not wanting people to assert, and perhaps even to believe, that Bute had entertained insidious schemes for raising himself to the throne. Bute is said to have declared that he resigned in order to avoid involving the King in the dangers with which his Minister was threatened. If he did feel any fears for the King's safety he had certainly done his best to make those fears reasonable. It has not often been given to any statesman to hold the highest office in the State for so short a time, and in that time to accomplish so large an amount of harm. And the immediate harm of that year and a half was little as compared with the harm that was to follow, a fatal legacy, from the principles that Bute advocated and the policy that Bute initiated.

With Bute retired two of his followers, Dashwood and Fox. Dashwood went to the Upper House as Lord Le Despencer; Fox accompanied him as Lord Holland. The disappearance of Dashwood from the Commons was a matter of little importance. The disappearance of Fox marked the conclusion of what had been a remarkable, of what might have been a great career. From this time Fox ceased to take any real part in public business. Dashwood never played any real part in public business, and if his presence lent no lustre to the Lords, his absence made the character of the Commons more honourable. Fox, with all his faults, and they were many and grave, had



in him the gifts of the politician and the capacity of the statesman. Dashwood was a vulgar fool, who, as Horace Walpole said, with the familiarity and phrase of a fishwife, introduced the humours of Wapping behind the veil of the Treasury. But Fox was a very different type of man. Had he been as keen for his own honour as he was eager in the acquisition of money, had he been as successful in building up a record of great deeds as he was successful in building up an enormous fortune, he might have left behind him one of the greatest names in the history of his age. But he carried with him to the Upper House the rare abilities which he had put to such unworthy uses, and he lives in memory chiefly as the father of his son. In having such a son he rendered the world a good service, which he himself laboured with infinite pains to make into an evil service.

A young, inexperienced, and headstrong King found himself suddenly the central figure of perhaps as singular a set of men as ever were gathered together for the purpose of directing the destinies of a nation. A famous caricature of the period represents the front of a marionette-show, through an aperture of which the hand of Bute pulls the wires that make the political puppets work, while Bute himself peeps round the corner of the show to observe their antics. No stranger dolls ever danced around a royal figure to the manipulation of a favourite's fingers. At a time when political parties as they are now familiar to us did not exist, when Whiggism was so dominant that Opposition in the modern sense was unknown, when the pleasures and the gains of administration were almost entirely reserved for a privileged caste, and when self-interest was the rarely disavowed spur of all individual action, it is scarcely surprising to find that the vast majority of the statesmen of the day were as unadmirable in their private as they were unheroic in their public life. For then and long after, the political atmosphere, bad at its best, was infamous at its worst, and by an unhappy chance the disposition of the King led him to favour in their public life the very men whose private life would have filled him with loathing, and to detest, where it was

impossible to despise, the men who came to the service of their country with characters that were clean from a privacy that was honourable. Many, if not most, of the leading figures of that hour would have been more appropriately situated as the members of a brotherhood of thieves and the parasites of a brothel than as the holders of high office and the caretakers of a royal conscience. There were men upon the highway, rogues with a bit of crape across their foreheads and a pair of pistols in their holsters, haunting the Portsmouth Road or Hounslow Heath, with the words "Stand and deliver" ever ready on their lips, who seem relatively to be men of honour and probity compared with a man like the first Lord Holland or like Rigby. There were poor slaves of the stews, wretched servants of the bagnios, whose lives seem sweet and decorous when compared with those of a Sandwich or a Dashwood or a Duke of Grafton. Yet these men, whose companionship might be rejected by Jack Sheppard, and whose example might be avoided by Pompey Bum, are the men whose names are ceaselessly prominent in the early story of the reign, and to whose power and influence much of its calamities are directly due.

It is not easy to accord a primacy of dishonour to any one of the many statesmen whose names degrade the age. Possibly the laurels of shame, possibly the palms of infamy may be proffered to Augustus Henry Fitzroy, third Duke of Grafton. When George the Third came to the throne the Duke of Grafton was only twenty-five years old, and had been three years in the House of Lords, after having passed about twice as many months in the House of Commons. Destined to live for more than half a century after the accession, and to die while the Sovereign had still many melancholy years to live, the Duke of Grafton enjoyed a long career, that was unadorned by either public or private virtue. There is no need to judge Grafton on the indictment of the satirist who in a later day made the name of Junius more terrible to the advisers of King George than ever was the name of Pietro Aretino to the princes whom he scourged. The coldest chronicle of the Duke's career, the baldest narrative of his life, prove him

to have been no less dangerous to the public weal as a statesman than he was noxious to human society as an individual. He had not even the redeeming grace that the charm of beauty of person lent to some of his companions in public incompetency and private profligacy. His face and presence were as unattractive as his manners were stiff and repellent. His grandfather, the first Duke, was an illegitimate son of Charles the Second by the Duchess of Cleveland, and the Duke's severest critic declared that he blended the characteristics of the two Charles Stuarts. Sullen and severe without religion, and profligate without gaiety, he lived like Charles the Second, without being an amiable companion, and might die as his father did, without the reputation of a martyr.

Grafton did not die the death of his royal ancestor. He lived through seventy-six years, of which less than half were passed in the fierce light of a disgraceful notoriety, and more than half in a retirement which should be styled obscure rather than decent. The only conspicuously creditable act of that long career was the patronage he extended to the poet Bloomfield, a patronage that seems to have been prompted rather by the fact that the writer was born near Grafton's country residence than by any intelligent appreciation of literature. His curious want of taste and feeling allowed him to parade his mistress, Nancy Parsons, in the presence of the Queen, at the Opera House, and to marry, when he married the second time, a first cousin of the man with whom his first wife had eloped, John, Earl of Upper Ossory. If his example as a father was not admirable, at least he showed it to a numerous offspring, for by his two marriages he was the parent of no fewer than sixteen children.

Perhaps the prize for sheer political ruffianism, for the frank audacity of the freebooter, unshadowed by the darker vices of his better-born associates, may be awarded to Rigby. Not that Rigby redeemed by many private virtues the unblushing effrontery of his public career. It was given to few men to be as bad as Dashwood, and Rigby was not one of the few. But his gross and brutal disregard of all decency in his acts of public plunder—for even



peculation may be done with distinction—was accompanied by a gross and brutal disregard of all decency in his tastes and pleasures with his intimate associates. Richard Rigby sprang from the trading class. He was the son of a linendraper who was sufficiently lucky to make a fortune as a factor to the South Sea Company, and who was, in consequence, able to afford his son the opportunity of a good education, and to launch him on the grand tour of Europe with every aptitude for the costly vices that men in those days seemed to think it the chief object of travel to cultivate, and with plenty of money in his pocket to gratify all his inclinations. Rigby did not take much advantage of his educational opportunities. His Latinity laid him open to derision in the House of Commons, and there were times when his spelling would have reflected little credit upon a seamstress. But he was quite capable of learning abroad all the evil that the great school of evil was able to teach a willing student. He returned to England, and began his life there with three pronounced tastes: for gambling, for wine, and for the baser uses of politics. His ambitions prompted him to adhere to the party of the Prince of Wales, and his ready purse won him a welcome among the courtiers of Leicester House. The Prince of Wales did little to gratify his hopes, and Rigby would have found it difficult to escape from the straits into which his debts and dissipation had carried him if his gift of pleasing had not procured for him a powerful patron. The Duke of Bedford had been attracted by the remarkable convivial powers of Rigby, powers remarkable in an age when to be conspicuous for conviviality demanded very unusual capacity both of head and of stomach. To be admired by Bedford was in itself a patent of dishonour, but it was a profitable patent to Rigby. The Duke, who was accused at times of a shameful parsimony, was generous to profusion towards the bloated buffoon who was able and willing to divert him, and from that hour Rigby's pockets never wanted their supply of public money.

There were few redeeming qualities in Rigby's character.

It was his peculiar privilege to be false to his old friends and to corrupt his young ones. In an age when sobriety was scorned or ignored he had the honour to be famous for his insobriety. A sycophant to those who could serve him and a bully to those who could not, Rigby added the meanness of the social parvenu to the malignity of the political bravo. At a time when men of birth and rank came to the House of Commons in the negligence of morning dress, Rigby was conspicuous for the splendour of his attire, and illuminated the green benches by a costume whose glow of colour only faintly attenuated the glowing colour of his face. There were baser and darker spirits ready for the service of the King; there was no one more unlovely.

Rigby's patron was as unadmirable as Rigby himself. He was fifty years old when George the Third came to the throne, and he had lived his half a century in the occupation of many offices and through many opportunities for distinction without distinguishing himself. He had still eleven years to live without adding anything of honour or credit to his name, or earning any other reputation than that of a corrupt politician whose private life was passed chiefly in the society of gamblers, jockeys, and buffoons. He had been Governor-General of Ireland, and had governed it as well as Verres had governed Sicily. He had been publicly horsewhipped by a county attorney on the racecourse at Lichfield. His career, always unimportant, was ignominious when it was not incapable, and it was generally both the one and the other.

All the statesmen of the day were not of the school of Grafton. There were numerous exceptions to the rule of Rigby. The Graftons and the Rigbys gain an unnatural prominence from the fact that then and later it was to such tools the King turned, and that he always found such tools ready to his hands. There were many men who, without any show of austerity or any burden of morality, were at least of a very different order from the creatures whom the King did not indeed delight to honour, but whom he condescended to employ. The Earl of Granville, with the weight of seventy years upon

his shoulders, carried into active political life under his fourth Sovereign the same qualities both for good and evil that adorned or injured the name of Carteret. He accepted Lord Bute's authority, and he did not live long enough to witness Bute's fall. He accorded to the peace brought about by Bute "the approbation of a dying statesman," as the most honourable peace the country had ever seen. He died in the January of 1763, leaving behind him the memory of a long life which had always been lived to his own advantage but by no means to the disadvantage of his country. He left behind him a memory of rare public eloquence and graceful private conversation, of an elegant scholarship that prompted him to the patronage of scholars, of a profound belief in his own judgment, and a no less profound contempt for the opinions of others. His public life was honest in an epoch when public dishonesty was habitual, and the best thing to be said of him was the best thing he said of himself, that when he governed Ireland he governed so as to please Dean Swift.

At a time when the King was surrounded by such advisers as we have seen, the King's chief servant and most loyal subject was a man no longer young, who had nothing to do with courts or councils, and who yet was of greater service to the throne and its occupier than all the House of Lords and half the House of Commons. Long years before George the Third was born, a struggling, unsuccessful schoolmaster gave up a school that was well-nigh given up by its scholars and came to London to push his fortune as a man of letters. When George the Third came to the throne the schoolmaster had not found fortune—that he never found—but he had found fame, and the name of Samuel Johnson was known and loved wherever an English word was spoken or an English book read. The conditions of political life in England in the eighteenth century made it impossible for such a man as Samuel Johnson ever to be the chosen counsellor, the Minister of an English King. The field of active politics was reserved for men of family, of wealth, or of the few whom powerful patronage served in lieu of birth and aided to the necessary opulence. Johnson was one of the most



influential writers of his day, one of the strongest intellectual forces then at work, one of the greatest personalities then alive. But it would no more have occurred to him to dream of administrative honours and a place in a Ministry than it would have occurred to George the Third to send one of his equerries to the dingy lodgings of an author with the request that Dr. Johnson would step round to St James's Palace and favour his Majesty with his opinion on this subject or on that. It is not certain that the King would have gained very much if he had done anything so unusual. Dr. Johnson's views were very much the King's views, and we know that he would have been as obstinate as the King in many if not most of the cases in which the King's obstinacy was very fatal to himself.

Samuel Johnson was born at Lichfield, in Staffordshire, on September 18, 1709. His father was a bookseller, perhaps too fond of books to be a good dealer in them. But his crowded shelves were a paradise to his son when at the age of sixteen he came home from the last of many schoolings, each of which had taught him much. For two years he read his way recklessly, riotously, and joyously through his father's migratory library. He took the advice of the varlet in "The Taming of the Shrew," and studied what he most affected. His memory was as vast as his head was huge and his body bulky. He read what he liked, but he remembered what he read, and he stored his mind with as miscellaneous a mass of knowledge as ever was heaped up within the pent-house of one human skull. That youthful zeal and fiery heat of study remained youthful with him to the end of his many days; the passion for learning never burned low in that mighty brain. The man who in his old age studied Dutch to test the acquiring powers of his intellect, and still found them freshly tempered, acted in his ebullient boyhood as if, like Bacon, he had taken all knowledge to be his province. The man who in his old age found an exquisite entertainment in reading a Spanish romance of chivalry, in his eager boyhood found the Latin poems of Petrarch sweeter than apples. The great Italian who counted the sonnets to which he owes his immortality but as the clouds of a dream, and who

built his hopes of fame upon that "Africa" which the world has been willing to forget, found the reader he would have welcomed and the student he would have cherished in the ungainly youth who pored over him in a garret. The boy Johnson, bent over the great folio, forgot that he was poor, forgot that he was ill-clad, under the spell of the stately lines that their poet believed to be not less than Virgilian. He had set out on an errand even more trivial than that of Saul the son of Kish, and he had found the illimitable kingdom of dreams.

Chance sent the student of Petrarch to Pembroke College, Oxford, where he passed two years eating the bitter bread of poverty in the bitter pride of youth. He was hungry, he was ragged, he was conscious of his great knowledge and his great gifts, and he saw all around him men in high places whose attainments he despised, and men seeking the same goal as himself whose happy ease of circumstances he affected to disdain and was compelled to envy. His wild soul rose in rebellion at the inequalities of life. He passed for a mutineer.

His college days were bitter and rebellious; days of hunger and thirst and ruined raiment. Some well-meaning person, moved to pity by the sight of Johnson's shabby shoes, patched and mended till they were past all wholesome cobbling, placed a new sound pair at Johnson's door in nameless benevolence. Johnson cast them from him with fury, too proud to be shod by another man's bounty. He drifted through his few and gloomy college days deriding and despising those in authority; seemingly wasting his time and yet not wasting it; translating Pope's "Messiah" into such noble Latin that Pope, moved by honest admiration, declared that future times would be unable to tell which was the original and which was the translation. Johnson could be nowhere without learning, and he learned something at Oxford; but in any case his stay was short, and he drifted back to Lichfield, leaving on the banks of the Isis an amazing memory of a sullen savage creature, brimmed with the strangest miscellaneous learning. In Lichfield his father's death, following hard upon his return from Oxford, left him lonelier and poorer than

ever, troubled by the grim necessity to be fed, clothed, and sheltered, and by the uncertainty how to set about it. He did set about it, earnestly, strenuously, if not very fruitfully.

He was ready to do anything, to turn to anything, to write, to translate, to teach. He fell in love with an amazing woman more than twenty years his senior, monstrously fat, monstrously painted, monstrously affected and absurd; he fell in love with her, and he married her. She had a little money, and Johnson set up an academy for the instruction of youth. But youth would not come to be instructed. One youth came, one of the very few, a soldier's son and a grandson of a Huguenot refugee, named David Garrick. The master and the pupil became friends, and the friendship lasted with life. Master and pupil resolved to make the adventure of the town together. The eyes of aspiring provincials turned always to the great city, every ambitious provincial heart beat with desire for the conquest of London. The priest of letters and the player of parts, the real man and the shadow of all men, packed up bag and baggage, and came to London to very different fame and very different fortune. The great city had one kind of welcome to give to the man who desired to speak truth and another to the man who proposed to give pleasure. The chances for men of letters and for players were very unlike just then. The two strands of life ran across the web of London, the strand of Johnson iron-grey, the strand of Garrick gleaming gold. Through long years Johnson hid in dingy courts and alleys, ill-clothed, ill-fed, an uncouth Apollo in the service of Admetus Cave and his kind, while the marvellous actor was climbing daily higher and higher on the ladder of an actor's fame, the friend of the wealthy, the favoured of the great, the admired, the applauded, the well beloved. Garrick deserved his fame and his fortune, his splendid successes and his shining rewards; but the grand, rough writer of books did not deserve his buffets and mishaps, his ferocious hungers, his acquaintanceship with sponging-houses, and all the catalogue of his London agonies. His struggle for life was a Titan's struggle, and it was never either selfish or ignoble. He wanted to



live and be heard because he knew that he had something to say that was worth hearing. He needed to live for the sake of his ardent squalid affections, for the sake of the people who were always dependent upon his meagre bounty, for the sake of the wife he loved so deeply, mourned so truly when she died, and remembered with such tender loyalty so long as life was left to him. Miserably poor himself, he always had about him people more miserable and more poor, who looked to him for the very bread and water of their affliction, dependants whom he tended not merely generously, but, what was better still, cheerfully. Under conditions of existence that would have seemed crushing to men of letters with a tithe of Johnson's greatness of soul, Johnson fought his way inch by inch in the terrible career of the man who lived by his pen, and by his pen alone. He wrote anything and everything so long as it was honourable to write, and promised to make the world better. But it was not what Johnson wrote so much as what Johnson did that commanded his age and commands posterity. In the truest sense of the word, he lived beautifully. "Rasselas" and "The Idler," "London" and "The Vanity of Human Wishes," "The Rambler" and "The Sessions of Lilliput," and the "Lives of the Poets," and even the famous "Dictionary," only claim remembrance because they were done by a man who would be as interesting a study and as ennobling an example if he had never written a line of the works that bear his signature in every sentence of their solemn, even their portentous majesty. Johnson had the kindest heart wrapped in a rugged hide. One of the noblest of the many noble stories about him relates how he and a friend, whose name of Burke was not then famous, found a poor woman of the streets houseless, hungry, and exhausted in the streets. Burke had a room which he could offer the poor creature for a night's shelter; but Burke could not get the woman there. Johnson had no room—his dependants swarmed over every available space at his command—but he had the strength of a giant, and he used it as a giant should, in carrying the poor wretch in his arms to the roof that Burke could offer her. Long years later, another man of letters,

hungry, homeless, and friendless, sick almost unto death, found a kind friend and gentle nurse in a woman of the streets. In succouring De Quincey we may well think that Anne was repaying something of the debt owed by one of her unhappy class to two of the glories of literature and of humanity.

Slowly and surely Johnson's fame spread. The "Dictionary," massive fruit of many vigils, reward of many supplications, made him illustrious. It might have been dedicated to Chesterfield, if Chesterfield had shown to the struggling author the courtesy he was eager to extend to the established writer. Chesterfield need not be blamed if he was reluctant to welcome a queer ungainly creature whose manners were appalling, and of whose genius no one save himself was assured. But he was to be blamed, and he deserved the stern punishment he received in Johnson's stinging letter of repudiation, for attempting, when Johnson was distinguished and beyond his power to help, to win the great honour of a dedication by a proffer of friendship that came too late. Johnson needed no Chesterfield now. London had learned to reverence him, had learned to love him. His friends were the best Englishmen alive; the club which Johnson established bore on its roll the most illustrious names in the country; at the home of the Thrales Johnson tasted and appreciated all that was best in the home life of the time. He had a devoted friend in the person of a fussy, fantastic, opinionated, conceited little Scotch gentleman, Mr. James Boswell of Auchinleck, who clung to his side, treasured his utterances, cherished his sayings, and made himself immortal in immortalising his hero. It is good to remember that when George the Third came to the throne a man like Johnson was alive. It is not so good to remember how seldom he found himself face to face with the King, whom he might have aided with his wisdom, his counsel, and his friendship.

Johnson's presence adorned and honoured four-and-twenty years of a reign that was to last for sixty years. He was the friend or the enemy of every man worthy to arouse any strong emotion of love or scorn in a strong

spirit. He had the admiration of all whose admiration was worth the having. The central figure of the literary London of his lifetime, he exercised something of the same social and intellectual influence over all Londoners that Socrates exercised over all Athenians. The affection he inspired survived him, and widens with the generations. In the hundred years and more that have passed since Johnson's death, his memory has grown greener. The symbol of his life and of its lesson is to be found in what Hawthorne beautifully calls the sad and lovely legend of the man Johnson's public penance in the rain, amidst the jeering crowd, to expiate the offence of the child against its father. Johnson was the very human apostle of a divine righteousness.

## CHAPTER XLIV

### "THE NORTH BRITON"

ONE of the most beautiful places on one of the most beautiful rivers in the world is Medmenham on the Thames, hard by Marlow. In the awakening of spring, in the tranquillity of summer, or the rich decline of August, the changing charm of the spot appeals with the special insistence that association lends to nature. Medmenham is a haunted place. Those green fields and smiling gardens have been the scenes of the strangest idylls; those shining waters have mirrored the fairest of frail faces; those woods have echoed to the names of the light nymphs of town and the laughter of modish satyrs. It was once very lonely in its loveliness, a ground remote, where men could do and did do as they pleased unheeded and unobserved. Where now from April to October a thousand pleasure-boats pass by, where a thousand pleasure-seekers land and linger, a century and a half ago the spirit of solitude brooded, and those who came there came to a calm as unvexed and as enchanting as the calm of Avallon. They made strange uses of their exquisite opportunity. They



profaned the groves whose very winds breathed peace; they polluted the stream that a poet would have found sacred. The remains are there of a Cistercian abbey, the ruins of a ruin, twice fallen into disuse and decay. It was a ruin in the eighteenth century when a member of Parliament, who was also a baronet and a Chancellor of the Exchequer, took it into his evil head to repair it. Under the care of Sir Francis Dashwood it was restored for a new and altered life. The abbey rose again, and once again was associated with a brotherhood of monks. But where the quiet Cistercians had lived and prayed a new brotherhood of St. Francis, named after their founder, devoted themselves to all manner of blasphemy, to all manner of offence. In a spot whose beauty might well be expected to have only a softening influence, whose memories might at least be found exalting, a handful of disreputable men gathered together to degrade the place, and, as far as that was possible, themselves, with the beastly pleasures and beastly humours of the ingrained blackguard.

The Hell-Fire Club was dead and gone, but the spirit of the Hell-Fire Club was alive and active. The monks of St. Francis were worthy pupils of the principles of the Duke of Wharton. They sought to make their profligacy, in which they strove to be unrivalled, piquant by a parody of the religious ceremonies of the Christian faith. The energy and the earnestness which other men devote to the advancement of some public cause, to the furtherance of their country's welfare, or even to the gratification of their own ambitions, these men devoted to a passion for being pre-eminent in sin, conspicuous in infamy. If they succeeded in nothing else, they succeeded in making their names notorious and shameful, they succeeded in stirring the envy of men no better than they, but less enabled by wealth or position to gratify their passions. They succeeded in arousing the loathing not merely of honest men, but even of the knaves and fools whose rascality was not so rotten and whose folly was not so foul as that of the noblemen and statesmen who rioted within the walls of Medmenham.

It is curious and melancholy to record that the leading

spirits of this abominable brotherhood were legislators in both Houses of Parliament, men of old family, great position, large means, men holding high public office, members of the Government. Their follies and their sins would scarcely be worth remembering to-day were it not for the chance that gave them for companion and ally one of the most remarkable men of his age, a man whose abilities were in striking contrast to those of his associates, a man who might almost be called a man of genius.

John Wilkes was the son of a rich distiller and of a Presbyterian mother. He had received a good education in England and at Leyden, where so many of the Englishmen of that day went as students. He had travelled much in his youth upon the Continent. On his return he was induced by his father, he being then only two-and-twenty, to marry a lady who was exceedingly rich, but who had the misfortune to be at least ten years older than her husband. It is scarcely surprising to find that the marriage did not turn out happily. Wilkes was young, fresh from the bright Continental life, delighting in pleasure and the society of those who pursued pleasure. How far a happier marriage might have influenced him for good it were idle to consider. His marriage he regarded always and spoke of always as a sacrifice to Plutus, not to Venus, and he certainly was at no pains to make it any more of a sacrifice than he could help. His wild tastes, his wild companions soon sickened and horrified Mrs. Wilkes. The ill-matched pair separated, and remained separate for the rest of their lives.

Wilkes was delighted to be free. He was at liberty to squander his money unquestioned and unchallenged in the society of as pretty a gang of scoundrels as even the age could produce. No meaner, more malignant, or more repulsive figure darkens the record of the last century than that of Lord Sandwich. Sir Francis Dashwood ran him close in infamy. Mr. Thomas Potter was the peer of either in beastliness. All three were members of Parliament; all three were partially responsible for the legislation of the country; two were especially so responsible. All three were bound at least to a decorous acknowledgment

of the observances of the Church ; one was in especial so bound. Sir Francis Dashwood and Lord Sandwich were, then or thereafter, members of the Government. Sir Francis Dashwood was remarkable as having been the worst and stupidest Chancellor of the Exchequer known to history. Lord Sandwich was made First Lord of the Admiralty. As for the third in this triumvirate of blackguards, Mr. Thomas Potter was a son of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and he was soon afterwards made Vice-Treasurer for Ireland. Into such honourable hands were the duties of government delivered less than a century and a half ago.

In this society Wilkes was made very welcome. He brought to their filthy fooleries something resembling wit ; he brought an intelligence as far above that of his companions as that of the monkey is above that of the rabbit. While he had money he spent it as royally as the rest. If he rivalled them in their profligacy, he outstripped them by his intellect. They were conspicuous only by their vices ; he would have been a remarkable man even if it had pleased Providence to make him virtuous. It had not pleased Providence to make him attractive to look upon. There were few uglier men of his day ; few who lost less by their ugliness. But though we are well assured that his appearance was repulsive, he redeemed his hideousness by his ready tongue and witty mind. He said of himself, truly enough, that he only wanted half an hour's start to make him even with the handsomest man in England.

Wilkes flung his money and his wife's money about recklessly, while he played his part as a country gentleman upon the estate at Aylesbury which his unhappy wife had resigned to him when they separated. Of this money some eight thousand pounds went in an unsuccessful attempt to bribe his way into the representation of Berwick, and seven thousand more went in the successful attempt to buy himself the representation of Aylesbury. It is probable that he hoped to advance his failing fortunes in Parliament. His fortunes were failing, failing fast. He made an ignoble attempt to bully his wife out of the



miserable income of two hundred a year which was all that she had saved out of her wealth, but the attempt was happily defeated by that Court of King's Bench against which Wilkes was to be pitted later in more honourable hostility.

It was perhaps impossible that Wilkes could long remain content with the companionship of men like Dashwood and Sandwich; it was certainly impossible that men like Dashwood and like Sandwich could for long feel comfortable in the companionship of a man so infinitely their superior in wit, intelligence, and taste. The panegyrists of Sandwich—for even Sandwich had his panegyrists in an age when wealth and rank commanded compliment—found the courage to applaud Sandwich as a scholar and an antiquarian, on the strength of an account of some travels in the Mediterranean, which the world has long since willingly let die. But the few weeks or months of foreign travel that permitted Sandwich to pose as a connoisseur when he was not practising as a profligate could not inspire him with the humour or the appreciation of Wilkes, and a friendship only cemented by a common taste for common vices soon fell asunder. There is a story to the effect that the quarrel began with a practical joke which Wilkes played off on Sandwich at Medmenham. Sandwich, in some drunken orgy, was induced to invoke the devil, whereupon Wilkes let loose a monkey, that had been kept concealed in a box, and drove Sandwich into a paroxysm of fear in the belief that his impious supplication had been answered. For whatever reason, Wilkes and Sandwich ceased to be friends, to Wilkes's cost at first, and to Sandwich's after. Sandwich owes his unenviable place in history to his association with Wilkes in the first place, and in the next to his alliance with the beautiful unhappy Miss Ray, who was murdered by her melancholy lover, the Rev. Mr. Hickman, at the door of Covent Garden Theatre. The fate of his mistress and his treason to his friend have preserved the name of Sandwich from the forgetfulness it deserved.

In those days Wilkes made no very remarkable figure in Parliament. It was outside the walls of Westminster

that he first made a reputation as a public man. In the unpopularity of Bute, Wilkes found opportunity for his own popularity. The royal peace policy was very unwelcome, and agitated the feeling of the country profoundly. Political controversy ran as high in the humblest cross-channels as in the main stream of courtly and political life. At that time, we are told by a contemporary letter-writer, the mason would pause in his task to discuss the progress of the peace, and the carpenter would neglect his work to talk of the Princess Dowager, of Lord Treasurers and Secretaries of State. To win support and sympathy from such keen observers the Ministry turned again for aid to the public press that had been so long neglected by the Whigs. Smollett, the remembered novelist, Murphy, the forgotten dramatist, were commissioned to champion the cause of the Government in the two papers "The Briton" and "The Auditor."

The Government already had a severe journalistic critic in "The Monitor," a newspaper edited by John Entinck, which had been started in 1755. "The Monitor" was not at all like a modern newspaper. It was really little more than a weekly pamphlet, a folio of six pages published every Saturday, and containing an essay upon the political situation of the hour. Its hostility to Bute goaded the minister into the production of "The Briton," which was afterwards supplemented by the creation of "The Auditor" when it was found that Smollett had called up against the Ministry a more terrible antagonist than "The Monitor." For "The Briton" only lives in the memories of men because it called into existence "The North Briton."

Wilkes had entered Parliament as the impassioned follower of Pitt. He made many professions of his desire to serve his country, professions which may be taken as sincere enough. But he was also anxious to serve himself and to mend his fortunes, and he did not find in parliamentary life the advancement for which he hoped. Twice he sought for high position under the Crown, and twice he was unsuccessful. He wished to be made ambassador to Constantinople, where he would have found much that was congenial to him, and his wish was not granted. He

wished to be made Governor-General of the newly conquered Quebec, and again his desires were unheeded. Wilkes believed that Bute was the cause of his double disappointment. He became convinced that while the favours of the State lay in Bute's hands they would only be given to Tories, and more especially to Tories who were also Scotchmen. If Bute could have known, it would have been a happy hour for him which had seen Wilkes starting for the Golden Horn or sailing for the St. Lawrence. But Bute was a foolish man, and he did his most foolish deed when he made Wilkes his enemy.

The appearance of "The North Briton" was an event in the history of journalism as well as in the political history of the country. It met the heavy-handed violence of "The Briton" with a frank ferocity which was overpowering. It professed to fight on the same side as "The Monitor," but it surpassed Entinck's paper as much in virulence as in ability. Under the whimsical pretence of being a North Briton, Wilkes assailed the Scotch party in the State with unflagging satire and unswerving severity. In the satire and the severity he had an able henchman in Charles Churchill.

Those who are inclined to condemn Wilkes because for a season he found entertainment in the society of a Sandwich, a Dashwood, and a Potter, must temper their judgment by remembering of the affection that Wilkes was able to inspire in the heart of Churchill. While the scoundrels of Medmenham were ready to betray their old associate, and, with no touch of the honour proverbially attributed to thieves, to drive him into disgrace, to exile, and if possible to death, the loyal friendship of the poet was given to Wilkes without reserve. Churchill was not a man of irreproachable character, of unimpeachable morality, or of unswerving austerity. But he was as different from the Sandwiches and the Dashwoods as dawn is different from dusk, and in enumerating all of the many arguments that are to be accumulated in defence of Wilkes, not the least weighty arguments are that while on the one hand he earned the hatred of Sandwich and of Dashwood, on the other hand he earned the love of Charles Churchill.

Churchill's name and fame have suffered of late years.



Since Byron stood by the neglected grave and mused on him who blazed, the comet of a season, the genius of Churchill has been more and more disregarded. But the Georgian epoch, so rich in its many and contrasting types of men of letters, produced few men more remarkable in themselves, if not in their works, than Charles Churchill. The cleric who first became famous for most unclerical assaults upon the stage, the satirist who could be the most devoted friend, the seducer who could be so loyal to his victim, the spendthrift who could be generous, the cynic who could feel and obey the principles of the purest patriotism, was one of those strangely compounded natures in which each vice was as it were effaced or neutralised by some compensating virtue. It may be fairly urged that while Churchill's virtues were his own, his vices were in large part the fault of his unhappy destiny. The Westminster boy who learned Latin under Vincent Bourne, and who was a schoolfellow of Warren Hastings, of Cowper, and of Colman, might possibly have made a good scholar, but was certainly not of the stuff of which good clergymen are made. An early marriage, an unhappy marriage contracted in the Rules of the Fleet, had weighed down his life with encumbrances almost before he had begun to live. Compelled to support an unsuitable wife and an increasing family, Churchill followed his father's example and his father's injudicious counsel and took Holy Orders. Men took Orders in those days with a light heart. It afforded the needy a livelihood, precarious indeed for the most part, but still preferable to famine. Men took Orders with no thought of the sanctity of their calling, of the solemn service it exacted, of its awful duties and its inexorable demands. They wished merely to keep famine from the door, to have food and fire and shelter, and they took Orders as under other conditions they would have taken the King's shilling, with no more feeling of reverence for the black cassock than for the scarlet coat. Churchill was not the man to wear the clergyman's gown with dignity, or to find in the gravity of his office consolation for the penury that it entailed. The Establishment offered meagre advantages to an extravagant man with an extravagant wife. He

drifted deeper and deeper into debt. He became as a wandering star, reserved for the blackness of bailiffs and the darkness of duns. But the rare quality he had in him of giving a true friendship to his friend won a like quality from other men. Dr. Lloyd, under-master of his old school of Westminster, came to his aid, helped him in his need, and secured the patience of his creditors. He was no longer harassed, but he was still poor, and the spur of poverty drove him to tempt his fortune in letters. Like so many a literary adventurer of the eighteenth century, he saw in the writing of verse the sure way to success. Like so many a literary adventurer of the century, he carried his first efforts unsuccessfully from bookseller to bookseller. The impulses of his wit were satirical; he was not dismayed by failure; the stage had entertained him and irritated him, and he made the stage the subject of his first triumph. "The Rosciad" was in every sense a triumph. Its stings galled the vanity of the players to frenzy. At all times a susceptible brotherhood, their susceptibilities were sharply stirred by Churchill's corrosive lines and acidulated epigrams. Their indignation finding vent in hot recrimination and virulent lampoon only served to make the poem and its author better known to the public. Churchill replied to the worst of his assailants in "The Apology," which rivalled the success of "The Rosciad," and gained for the satirist the friendship of Garrick, who had affected to disdain the praises of "The Rosciad," but who now recognised in time the power of the satirist and the value of his approval. Churchill himself was delighted with his good fortune. He was the talk of the town; he had plenty of money in his pocket; he was separated from his wife, freed from his uncongenial profession, and he could exchange the solemn black of the cleric for a blue coat with brass buttons and a gold-laced hat.

Lest the actors whom he had lashed should resort to violence for revenge, he carried with ostentation a sturdy cudgel. It was a formidable weapon in hands like Churchill's, and Churchill was not molested. For Churchill was a man of great physical strength. He tells

the world in the portrait he painted of himself of the vastness of his bones, of the strength of his muscles, of his arms like two twin oaks, of his legs fashioned as if to bear the weight of the Mansion House, of his massive body surmounted by the massive face, broader than it was long. The ugly face was chiefly remarkable, according to the confession of its owner, for its expression of contentment, though the observant might discern "sense lowering in the pent-house of his eye." Like most giants, he overtaxed his strength, both mentally and physically. Whatever he did he did with all his mighty energy. He loved, hated, worked, played, at white heat as it were, and withered up his forces with the flame they fed. In nothing did his zeal consume itself more hotly than in his devotion to Wilkes.

Churchill met Wilkes in 1762, and seems to have fallen instantly under the spell which Wilkes found it so easy to exercise upon all who came into close contact with him. Undoubtedly Churchill's friendship was very valuable to Wilkes. If Churchill loved best to express his satire in verse, he could write strongly and fiercely in prose, and "The North Briton" owed to his pen some of its most brilliant and some of its bitterest pages. In "The North Briton" Wilkes and Churchill laid about them lustily, striking at whatever heads they pleased, holding their hands for no fame, no dignity, no influence. It was wholly without fear and wholly without favour. If it assailed Bute again and again with an unflagging zeal, it was no less ready to challenge to an issue the greatest man who ever accepted a service from Bute, and to remind Dr. Johnson, who had received a pension from the King's favourite, of his own definition of a pension and of a pensioner.

Before the fury and the popularity of "The North Briton" both "The Auditor" and "The Briton" had to strike their colours. "The Auditor" came to its inglorious end on February 8, 1763. "The Briton" died on the 12th of the same month, leaving "The North Briton" master of the field. Week after week "The North Briton" grew more severe in its strictures upon the Government, strictures that scorned the veil of hint and innuendo that had hitherto prevailed in these pamphleteering wars. Even



"The Monitor" had always alluded to the statesmen whom it assailed by initial letters. "The North Briton" boldly called them by their names in all the plainness of full print, the name of the Sovereign not being excepted from this courageous rule. But the fame of "The North Briton" only came to its full with the number forty-five.

## CHAPTER XLV

### NUMBER FORTY-FIVE

WHEN Bute disappeared from the public leadership of his party, Wilkes, from professedly patriotic motives, delayed the publication of the current number of "The North Briton," to see if the policy which Bute had inspired still guided the actions of the gentle shepherd, George Grenville. Wilkes wished to know if the influence of the Scottish Minister was at an end, or if he still governed through those wretched tools who had supported the most odious of his measures, the ignominious peace, and the wicked extension of the arbitrary mode of excise. He declared himself that if Bute only intended to retire into that situation which he held before he took the seals, a situation in which he dictated to every part of the King's Administration, Wilkes was as ready to combat the new Administration as he had been steady in his opposition to a single, insolent, incapable, despotic Minister.

Any hope that Wilkes may have entertained of a reformation of the Ministry was dispelled by a talk which he had with Temple and Pitt at Temple's house, where Temple showed him an early copy of the King's Speech. Wilkes, Pitt, and Temple were entirely in agreement as to the fatal defects of the speech, and Wilkes went promptly home and wrote the article which made the forty-fifth number of "The North Briton" famous.

In itself the number forty-five was no stronger in its utterances than many of the preceding numbers. If its tone be compared with the tone of journalistic criticism of

Ministers or their Sovereign less than a generation later, it seems sober and even mild. Wilkes's article started with a citation from Cicero: "*Genus orationis atrox et vehemens, cui opponitur genus illud alterum lenitatis et mansuetudinis.*" Then came Wilkes's comment on the speech. He was careful not to criticise directly the King. With a prudence that was perhaps more ironical than any direct stroke at the Sovereign, he attacked the Minister who misled and misrepresented the monarch. "The King's Speech has always been considered by the legislature and by the public at large as the speech of the Minister."

Starting from this understanding, Wilkes went on to stigmatise the Address as "the most abandoned instance of ministerial effrontery ever attempted to be imposed upon mankind," and he doubted whether "the imposition is greater upon the Sovereign or on the nation." "Every friend of his country," the writer declared, "must lament that a prince of so many great and amiable qualities, whom England truly reveres, can be brought to give the sanction of his sacred name to the most odious measures and to the most unjustifiable public declarations from a throne ever renowned for truth, honour, and unsullied virtue."

The article was not intemperate and it certainly was not unjust. But when it appeared the King was still new flushed with his idea of his own personal authority in the State, and the slightest censure of his policy goaded him into a kind of frenzy. Had Wilkes endeavoured with his own hand to kill the King in his palace of St. James's he could hardly have made the monarch more furious. He had long hated and his Ministers had long dreaded the outspoken journalist. King and Ministers now felt that the time had arrived when they could strike, and strike effectively. The King commanded the law officers of the Crown to read the article and give their opinion upon it. The law officers did the work that they knew the King expected from them. They found that the paper was an infamous and seditious libel tending to incite the people to insurrection. They declared that the offence was one punishable in due course of law as a misdemeanour. Upon this hint the Ministers acted, rapidly and rashly. A general warrant was issued for the

apprehension of the authors, printers, and publishers of "The North Briton." The printer and the publisher were arrested and brought before Lord Halifax and Lord Egremont, to whom they gave up the names of John Wilkes and Charles Churchill as the authors of "The North Briton." The next step was to arrest Wilkes himself.

The King's messengers came upon Wilkes in his house in Great George Street, Westminster. It is honourably characteristic of the man that in the moment of his own danger he felt more concern for the danger of another. While he was arguing with the officials that they had no power to arrest him as he was a member of Parliament and therefore privileged against arrest, Churchill came into the room on a visit to Wilkes. Churchill, Wilkes knew, was as certain to be arrested as he was. Churchill could plead no privilege. It was probable that the messengers were unfamiliar with Churchill's face. Wilkes, with happy good nature and happy audacity, immediately hailed Churchill as Mr. Thompson, clasped his hand and inquired affectionately how Mrs. Thompson did and if she was going to dine in the country. If Wilkes was clever in his suggestion, Churchill was no less clever in taking the hint. He thanked Wilkes, declared that Mrs. Thompson was at that moment waiting for him, and that he had merely called in to inquire after the health of Wilkes. Saying which, Churchill swiftly bowed himself out, hurried home, secured all his papers, and disappeared into the country. The King's messengers, who were promptly at his lodgings, were never able to discover his whereabouts.

The flight to which Wilkes so ingeniously assisted him is not the brightest part of Churchill's career. He carried with him into his retreat a young girl, a Miss Carr, the daughter of a Westminster stonecutter, whom the charms of Churchill's manners had induced to leave her father's house. He could not marry the girl as he was married already, and, to do him justice, he appears soon to have repented the wrong he had done her. But after an unsuccessful attempt on the girl's part to live again with her own people she returned to her lover, and she lived with her lover to the end. Churchill seems to have been sin-



cerely attached to her. If he had been a free man, if his life had not been blighted by his early unhappy marriage, their union might have been a very happy one. At his death he left annuities to both women, to the woman he had married and the woman he had loved, the wife's annuity being the larger of the two.

While Churchill was making his way as quickly as possible out of a town that his services to his friend had rendered too hot to hold him. Wilkes was immediately hurried before Lord Halifax and Lord Egremont at Whitehall. He carried himself very composedly in the presence of his enemies. He persistently asserted his privilege, as a member of Parliament, against arrest. He refused to answer any questions or to acknowledge the authorship of No. 45 of "The North Briton." He professed with equal enthusiasm his loyalty to the King and his loathing of the King's advisers, and he announced his intention of bringing the matter before Parliament the moment that the session began. Egremont and Halifax retaliated by sending Wilkes to the Tower and causing his house to be searched and all his papers to be seized. The high-handed folly of the King's friends had for their chief effect the conversion of men who had little sympathy for Wilkes into, if not his advocates, at least his allies against the illegal methods which were employed to crush him.

Wilkes, through his friends, immediately applied to the Court of Common Pleas for a writ of *habeas corpus*. This was at once obtained, and was served upon the messengers of the Secretary of State. But Wilkes was no longer in their custody, and Wilkes was detained in the Tower for a whole week. part of the time, as he declared, in solitary confinement, before he was brought into court. Judge Pratt immediately ordered his discharge on the ground of his claim to immunity from arrest as a member of Parliament, without prejudice to any later action against him.

It was while Wilkes was before Pratt at Westminster that, if we may accept the authority of Churchill, one of Wilkes's keenest enemies seized an opportunity for a cruel revenge. Hogarth hated both Wilkes and Churchill. He had begun the quarrel by attacking "The North Briton" and

"The Monitor" in his cartoon "The Times," executed for the greater glorification of the painter's patron, Lord Bute. "The North Briton" replied to this attack with a vigour which infuriated Hogarth, who had his full share of the irritable vanity which the world always attributes to the artist. In Wilkes's difficulty Hogarth saw his opportunity. Lurking behind a screen in the Court of Common Pleas, the painter sought and found an opportunity of making a sketch of Wilkes. While Justice Pratt, with what Wilkes called "the eloquence and courage of old Rome," was laying down the law upon the prisoner's plea preparatory to setting him at liberty, Hogarth's busy pencil was engaged upon the first sketch for that caricature which has helped to make Wilkes's features famous and infamous throughout the world. The print was promptly published at a shilling, and commanded an enormous sale. Nearly four thousand copies, it is said, were sold within a few weeks. The evenvenomed skill of Hogarth has made the appearance of Wilkes almost as familiar to us as to the men of his own time. The sneering satyr face, the sinister squint, the thrust-out chin and protruding lower jaw belong to a face severely visited by Nature, even when liberal allowance is made for the animosity that prompted the hand of the caricaturist. The caricature was a savage stroke; to Wilkes's friends it seemed to be a traitor's stroke. Wilkes appears to have taken it, as he took most things, with composure. "I know," he wrote later, "but one short apology to be made for the person of Mr. Wilkes; it is that he did not make himself, and that he never was solicitous about the case of his soul (as Shakespeare calls it) only so far as to keep it clean and in health. I never heard that he once hung over the glassy stream, like another Narcissus, admiring the image in it, nor that he ever stole an amorous look at his counterfeit in a side mirror. His form, such as it is, ought to give him no pain while it is capable of giving so much pleasure to others. I believe he finds himself tolerably happy in the clay cottage to which he is tenant for life, because he has learned to keep it in pretty good order; while the share of health and animal spirits which Heaven has given him shall hold out, I can scarcely

imagine he will be one moment peevish about the outside of so precarious, so temporary a habitation, or will ever be brought to own 'Ingenium Galbæ male habitat': 'Monsieur est mal logé.'" Good-humoured at the time, his good-humour persevered, and in later life he was wont to say jestingly that he found he was growing more and more like his famous portrait every day. But if it was becoming of Wilkes to bear the attack in so serene and even so jocular a spirit, it was not unbecoming, as it was not ungenerous, of his friends to fail to imitate the coolness of their leader. It is not quite easy to understand why in an age of caricature, an age when all men of any notoriety were caricatured, the friends of Wilkes were so sensitive to the satire of Hogarth. Public men, and the friends of public men, have grown less sensitive. However, Wilkes's friends were, and showed themselves to be, as angry as Wilkes was, or showed himself to be, indifferent, and the hottest and angriest of them all was Churchill. Churchill could retaliate, and Churchill did retaliate with a ferocity that equalled and more than equalled Hogarth's.

With a rage that was prompted by friendship, yet with a coolness that the importance of the cause he championed called for, Churchill aimed blow after blow upon the offending painter. The skill of a practised executioner directed every stroke to a fresh spot, and with every stroke brought blood. The satirist called upon Hogarth by his name, to stand forth and be tried "in that great court where conscience must preside," bade him review his life from his earliest youth, and say if he could recall a single instance in which

Thou with an equal eye didst genius view  
And give to merit what was merit's due?  
Genius and merit are a sure offence,  
And thy soul sickens at the name of sense.

The poet goes on to say that "when Wilkes our countryman, our common friend arose, his King, his country to defend," Malice

Had killed thee, tottering on life's utmost verge,  
Had Wilkes and Liberty escaped thy scourge.

And then, in some two hundred lines of strenuous rage,



Churchill denounced Hogarth with a denunciation that was the more effective because it was accompanied by a frank and full recognition of Hogarth's great gifts and deserved title to fame. Hogarth retaliated by his famous caricature of Churchill as a canonical bear with a pot of porter in one paw and a huge cudgel in the other, the knots on the cudgel being numbered as Lie 1, Lie 2, and so forth. Instantly the great caricaturist was attacked by others eager to strike at one who had struck so hard in his day. The hatred of Bute was extended to the painter who condescended to accept Bute's patronage, and who laboured to please his patron. Hogarth was derided as "The Butyfier," in mockery of his "Analysis of Beauty." It would have been as lucky for Hogarth as it would have been lucky for Bute to let Wilkes alone.

If Wilkes's release filled his supporters throughout the country with delight, it only spurred on his enemies to fresh attempts and fresh blunders. Had they left the matter where it stood, even though it stood at a defeat to them, they would have spared themselves much ignominy. But the fury of the King inspired a fiercer fury in the Ministers and those who followed the Ministers. Every weapon at their command was immediately levelled at Wilkes, even, it may not be unfairly asserted, the assassin's weapon. Wilkes carried himself gallantly, defiantly, even insolently. His attitude was not one to tempt angry opponents to forbearance. His letters from the Tower and after his release to Lord Halifax were couched in the most contemptuous language. He brought an action against Lord Halifax. He brought an action against Mr. Wood, the Under-Secretary of State, and was awarded £1000 damages. When Lord Egremont died, in the August of 1763, Wilkes declared that he had "been gathered to the dull of ancient days." He republished the numbers of "The North Briton" in a single volume with notes, to prove that the King's Speech could constitutionally be only regarded as the utterance of the King's Ministers. There must have been a splendid stubbornness in the man which enabled him to face so daringly, so aggressively, the desperate odds against him.

Every man who wished to curry favour with the King and the King's Ministers was ready to strike his blow at Wilkes. There was not a bully among the hangers-on of King and Ministers who was not eager to cross swords with Wilkes or level pistol at him. Insult after insult, injury after injury, were offered to the obnoxious politician. The King dismissed him from the colonelcy of the Buckinghamshire Militia. Lord Temple was the Lord-Lieutenant of the county of Buckinghamshire, and as Lord-Lieutenant it was his duty to convey to Wilkes the news of his disgrace. Never was such news so conveyed. Temple told Wilkes of his dismissal in a letter of warm enthusiasm, of warm personal praise. The King immediately retaliated by removing Temple from the Lord-Lieutenantcy and striking his name off the list of privy councillors. The enmity was not confined to the King and to the parasites who sought to please the King. Dr. Johnson declared that if he were the monarch he would have sent half a dozen footmen to duck Wilkes for daring to censure his royal master or his royal master's Ministers. In the House of Commons the hostility was at its height. When Parliament met Wilkes sought to call the attention of the House to his case, but was anticipated by Grenville, who read a royal message directed at Wilkes, the result of which was that the House voted that the number Forty-five of "The North Briton" was a seditious libel, and ordered it to be burnt by the common hangman.

The basest part of the attack upon Wilkes was the use that his enemies made of his private papers, the way in which they associated his political conduct with an offence that was wholly unpolitical. It had amused Wilkes to set up a private printing-press at his own house. At this press certain productions were printed which were no doubt indecent, which were no doubt blasphemous, but which were furthermore so foolish as to make both their indecency and their blasphemy of very little effect. One was the "Essay on Woman," written as a parody of Pope's "Essay on Man"; the other was an imitation of the "Veni Creator." Neither of these pieces of gross buffoonery bore any author's name. Very few copies of them had been printed, and these few

solely for circulation among private friends with a taste for foul literature. No offence had been committed, no offence had been intended, against public morality. It is certain, as far as any literary puzzle can be regarded as certain, that Wilkes's share in the dirty business was chiefly, if not entirely, limited to the printing of the pages. The "Essay on Woman," as those who have had the misfortune to read it know, is a dreary writer's piece of schoolboy obscenity, if entirely disgusting, no less entirely dull. The text of the "Essay" was composed in great part, if not altogether, by Potter, the unworthy son of the Archbishop of Canterbury and worthy member of the Medmenham brotherhood. When Wilkes's papers were seized, or by some other means, the Government got possession of the proof sheets of the "Essay on Woman." They immediately resolved, in defiance of public decency, of political morality, to use it as a weapon against their enemy. It shows the shallowness of their pretence at justification that they put the weapon into the hands of the worst and basest of Wilkes's former friends and allies in profligacy, into the hands of Lord Sandwich. On the first night of the session Lord Sandwich rose in the House of Lords, and proceeded to denounce Wilkes and the "Essay on Woman" with a vehemence of false austerity that impressed the assembly and infinitely delighted Lord Le Despencer, who had been the common friend, the brother sinner of accuser and accused, and who now expressed much entertainment at hearing the devil preach. The spurious virtue of Sandwich was followed by the spurious indignation of Warburton. The "Essay on Woman" contained certain notes written in parody of Warburton's notes to the "Essay on Man," just as the verses themselves were a parody of Pope's poem. Warburton chose to regard this as a breach of privilege, and he assailed Wilkes with even greater fury than Sandwich had done, winding up by apologising to the devil for even comparing Wilkes to him. An admiring House immediately voted the poems obscene, libellous, and a breach of privilege. Two days afterwards an address from the Lords called upon the King to prosecute Wilkes for blasphemy.



Wilkes was unable to face this new attack. He had already fallen a victim to an attack of another and no less malignant nature. While the creatures of the Government in the Upper House were trying to destroy his character, one of their creatures in the Lower House was doing his best to take Wilkes's life. This was a man named Martin, who had been attacked in "The North Briton" some eight months earlier. Martin seems to have resolved upon revenge, and to have set about obtaining it after the fashion not of the gentleman, but of the bravo. Day by day, week by week, month by month, he practised himself in pistol-shooting until he considered that his skill was sufficient to enable him to take the dastard's hazard in a duel. He seized the opportunity of the debate on November 15 to describe the writer in "The North Briton" as "a coward and a malignant scoundrel." When Wilkes, on the following day, avowed the authorship of the paper, Martin sent him a challenge. The challenge was in all respects a strange one. It was treacherous, because it came at the heels of deliberate preparation. It was peremptory, for it called upon Wilkes to meet his enemy in Hyde Park within an hour. It contravened the laws of the duello, because Martin, who was the challenger, himself insisted on the use of the weapons with which he had made himself so murderously skilful. Wilkes accepted the duel with characteristic courage, with characteristic rashness. He met Martin in Hyde Park, and the amateur bravo shot Wilkes through the body. It is a further characteristic of the many elements of good that went to Wilkes's strange composition that, as he lay on the grass bleeding fast and apparently mortally wounded, his first care was not for himself and his hurt, but for the safety of his adversary, of an adversary who deserved chivalrous treatment as little as if he had taken Wilkes unawares and shot him in the back.

While Wilkes was lying on what threatened to be his death-bed the feeling on both sides only increased in intensity. The Ministry were indifferent to the helplessness of their enemy. Wilkes was expelled from the House of Commons. He was expelled from the Militia. The

common hangman was ordered publicly to burn "The North Briton," but the hangman was not suffered to obey the order. An angry mob set upon him and upon the sheriffs who were assisting at the ceremony, rescued "The North Briton" from its persecutors, and in rude retaliation burned instead the joint emblems of the popular disdain—a boot and a petticoat. The people's blood was up; the symptoms were significant enough for any save such a King and such Ministers to understand. While the Ministry, with a refinement of cruelty, were sending daily the King's surgeons to watch Wilkes's health and proclaim the moment when he might again be attacked, the Corporation of Dublin was setting an example that was soon followed by the Corporation of London and by other corporations in presenting him with the freedom of its city. While Wilkes was slowly journeying towards Paris, where his daughter was, and passing, as he wrote, "the most unhappy days he had known," an angry mob gibbeted the effigy of Bute at one of the gates of Exeter, and kept the image swinging there in derision for a fortnight in defiance of the authorities. While Wilkes was languishing in foreign exile to save his liberty and his very life from the malignity of his enemies, his portrait, painted by Reynolds, was placed in the Guildhall with an inscription in honour of the jealous assertor of English liberty by law.

Wilkes was well advised in keeping out of England. He had done his part. The decisions of Pratt in the Court of Common Pleas, the decisions in the Guildhall, had conferred a permanent benefit upon the English citizen. But Wilkes was not bound to put himself into the power of his enemies in order to establish the authorship of the "Essay on Woman." His enemies took as much advantage as they could of his absence. He was found guilty by the Court of King's Bench of having reprinted the number Forty-five and of having written the "Essay on Woman." As he did not appear to receive his sentence, he was promptly outlawed for contumacy. Thus a Ministry wise in their own conceit believed that they had got rid of Wilkes for good and all. They did not note, or if they noted did not heed, that the favourite sign of ale-houses

throughout the country was the head of Wilkes. They were indifferent to the fact that Wilkes had come to be regarded in all directions as the champion of popular liberty. All they knew, all that they cared to know, was that Wilkes was in exile, and was like enough to die in exile. Even the success of "The Beggar's Opera" taught them nothing, and yet the success of "The Beggar's Opera" was a significant lesson. "The Beggar's Opera" was revived at Covent Garden while the excitement about Wilkes was at its height, and its audiences were as ready to read in political allusions between the lines as they had been at the time of its first production. The line "That Jemmy Twitcher should peach on me I own rather surprises me" was converted at once into an innuendo at the expense of Lord Sandwich, to whom the name Jemmy Twitcher was immediately applied by the public at large, almost to the disuse, so Horace Walpole tells us, of his own title.

But the Ministry had so far triumphed that for four years Wilkes remained away from England, drifting from one foreign capital to another, making friends and winning admirers everywhere, and employing his enforced leisure in attempting great feats of literary enterprise. A scheme for a Constitutional History of England was succeeded by a no less difficult and, as it proved, no less impracticable scheme. During Wilkes's exile he lost the most famous of his enemies and the most famous of his friends. On October 26, 1764, Hogarth died. It was commonly said, and generally credited, that he died of a broken heart in consequence of the furious attacks which had followed upon his unhappy quarrel with Wilkes. It was a pity that the closing hours of Hogarth's life should have been occupied with so petty and so regrettable a squabble. Hogarth was entirely in the wrong. Hogarth began the quarrel; and if Hogarth was eager to give hard knocks he should have been ready to take hard knocks in return. But the world at large may very well be glad that Hogarth did lurk in the court of Justice Pratt and did make his memorable sketch of Wilkes. The sketch serves to show us if not what Wilkes exactly was, at least what Wilkes seemed to be to a great many of his countrymen.



The caricaturist is a priceless commentator. If Hogarth indeed indirectly shortened his life by his portrait of Wilkes, he gave, as if by transfusion of blood, an increased and abiding vitality to certain of the most interesting pages of history.

Within a few days of Hogarth, Churchill died. His devotion to Wilkes prompted him to join him in his Continental banishment. He got as far as Boulogne, where Wilkes met him, and at Boulogne he died of a fever, after formally naming Wilkes as his literary executor. Wilkes, who was always prompted by generous impulses, immediately resolved that he would edit a collected edition of Churchill's works, and for a time he buried himself in seclusion in Naples with the firm intention of carrying out this purpose. But the task was too great both for the man and for the conditions under which he was compelled to work. In the first place, annotations of such poems as Churchill's required constant reference to and minute acquaintance with home affairs, such as it was well-nigh impossible for an exile to command. In the second place, it was not an easy task for a man even with a very high opinion of himself to play the part of editor and annotator of poems a great part of which had him for hero. In a very short time the work was abandoned, and Wilkes emerged from his literary retreat.

Wilkes has been very bitterly and, as it would appear, very unjustly upbraided for this seeming neglect of his dead friend's wishes, of his dead defender's fame. In spite of those whose zeal for the memory of Churchill drives them into antagonism with the memory of Wilkes, it may be believed that the task was not one "for which Wilkes could, with the greatest ease, have procured all the necessary materials; and to which he was called not by the sacred duties of friendship only, but by the plainest considerations of even the commonest gratitude." Even if Wilkes had been, which Wilkes was not, the kind of man to make a good editor, a good annotator, the difficulties that lay in the way of the execution of his task were too many. The fact that the poems were so largely about himself gave a sufficient if not an almost imperative reason

why he should leave the task alone. But in any case he must have felt conscious of what events proved, that there was other work for him to do in the world than the editing of other men's satires.

Not, indeed, that the genius of Churchill needed any tribute that Wilkes or any one else could bestow. His monument is in his own verses, in the story of his life. If indeed the lines from "The Candidate" which are inscribed on Churchill's tombstone tell the truth, if indeed his life was "to the last enjoyed," part of that enjoyment may well have come from the certainty that the revolutions of time would never quite efface his name or obscure his memory. The immortality of the satirist must almost inevitably be an immortality rather historical than artistic; it is rather what he says than how he says it which is accounted unto him for good. As there are passages of great poetic beauty in the satires of Juvenal, so there are passages of poetic beauty in the satires of Churchill. But they are both remembered, the great Roman and the great Englishman, less for what beauty their work permitted than for the themes on which they exercised their wit. The study of Churchill is as essential to a knowledge of the eighteenth century in London as the study of Juvenal is essential to a knowledge of the Rome of his time. That fame Churchill had secured for himself; to that fame nothing that Wilkes or any one else might do could add.

END OF VOL. I





